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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

PART I. OVERALL POLICY-MAKING, DIRECTION AND COORDINATION

Section I. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

I.1. Part I of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 covers section I, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination. The estimate of $38,622,800 for 1998-1999 represents the regular budget requirements for the biennium 1998-1999.

I.2. With regard to extrabudgetary resources, the Advisory Committee notes that of the total $10.1 million (table 1.1) a total amount of $6,689,000 has been shown for peacekeeping operations and operational projects. The Advisory Committee understands that this relates to requirements for external audit. The Committee believes that it is not sufficient to reflect the amounts without an indication of the sources and uses of the funds. The Committee requests that a clearer narrative indication of extrabudgetary resources be included in the budget submission in the future. Terms such as "operational projects", "other" and "contractual services" should be properly explained.

* The present document contains part I of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

I.3. On enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that of the total $6,689,000, approximately $1.9 million relates to audit of peacekeeping operations, $3.6 million to audit of funds and programmes, $225,520 to audit of trust funds and $145,020 to audit costs for the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

I.4. As indicated in table 1.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 117, representing a decrease of five regular budget posts as compared with the total of 122 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. The total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 8, the same number as for the biennium 1996-1997. Of the five regular budget posts proposed to be abolished, the Advisory Committee was informed that three posts were vacant as of the end of August 1997.

I.5. The Advisory Committee notes the footnote to table 1.1 regarding the transfer of resources in the amount of $3,459,000 related to the servicing of the General Assembly. The Committee trusts that care will be taken to ensure that the resources transferred are utilized wholly for the needs of the Assembly and that their use will be monitored.

I.6. The Advisory Committee recalls that in paragraph I.3 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,[1] the Committee had requested (but was not provided with) information on resources made available to the Office of the President of the General Assembly. The Committee had also expressed its view that there was a need to ensure that the Office of the President of the General Assembly was provided with adequate resources. The Committee believes that need has become more pronounced owing to the extended meeting schedule of the Assembly throughout the year. The Committee will revert to this matter in the context of its examination of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/303, in which additional resources are being requested for the Office of the President.

I.7. With regard to the secretariat of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Secretary-General proposes to continue the current number of regular budget and extrabudgetary posts. In paragraph 31 of its report on the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/51/906 and Corr.1), the Advisory Committee recalled section I of General Assembly resolution 48/185 C of 20 December 1991, in which the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to keep under review the method of financing of posts in the secretariat of the Advisory Committee that were not part of the regular budget. The Committee recalled that it is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and the functions it performs to implement its mandate fully are entirely on behalf of the Assembly; they are thus core functions of the Organization. The Committee also stated its belief that the funding of its extrabudgetary posts should be reviewed in the context of the consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Under the circumstances, the Committee recommends that the funding of its secretariat be rationalized through the financing of all of the posts under the regular budget.

I.8. As indicated in table 1.11 of the proposed programme budget, total resources being requested for the Board of Auditors, including its secretariat, amount to $10,428,800, comprising $4,097,100 regular budget resources and $6,331,700 extrabudgetary resources. On enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the level of resources required by the Board is determined by the Board itself and that the three members of the Board share the resources on an equal basis as well as on the extent of their responsibilities. With regard to the scope of the audits, the Committee draws attention to financial

regulation 12.6 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, which states that the Board of Auditors shall be completely independent and solely responsible for the conduct of the audit. The Committee also draws attention to regulation 12.8, which states that the Secretary-General shall provide the Board of Auditors with the facilities it may require in the performance of the audit.

I.9. With regard to the Board of Auditors, the Advisory Committee was informed that for the period from 1 January 1996 to 31 May 1997, 215 auditors were involved in auditing various United Nations entities; 147 audits were undertaken for a duration of two to eight weeks and the volume of operations audited totalled $14,400 million, comprising $9,200 million for funds and programmes, $2,600 million for peacekeeping missions and $2,600 million for the regular budget.

I.10. The Advisory Committee notes the post requirements of the secretariat of the Board as reflected in table 1.12 and paragraph 1.22 of the proposed programme budget. The provision relates to salaries and common staff costs of the secretariat of the Board, consisting of one D-1 and four General Service (Other level) posts. As reflected in table 1.12, the positive growth of $5,800 reflects the combined effect of the application of new standardized vacancy rates and the reclassification of a P-5 post to the D-1 level. The Committee recalls that in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995,[2] it noted the Secretary-General's proposal to downgrade the post of Executive Secretary of the Board from the D-1 to the P-5 level. The Committee had also noted that the Board had not been consulted about the proposal and that the post had been vacant at that time since August 1993. The Committee recommends acceptance of the proposal to restore the post of the Executive Secretary of the Board to the D-1 level. In this connection, the Committee draws attention to General Assembly resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995, in which the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to keep under review the level of the post of the Executive Secretary of the Board of Auditors, taking into account the increased workload of the Board.

I.11. The Advisory Committee notes that the resources proposed for external audit under section I of the proposed programme budget amount to $10,428,800. In addition, as indicated in section 28 of the proposed programme budget, the resources proposed for internal audit are estimated at $16,469,600 for the biennium 1998-1999. The Committee was, however, not able to ascertain the total amount allocated for audit purposes in the individual peacekeeping operations.

I.12. With regard to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, as indicated in paragraph 1.29 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, implications for the regular budget of action to be taken by the Standing Committee of the Pension Fund and the decision by the General Assembly in connection with the recommendations of the Fund will be the subject of a statement of programme budget implications.

I.13. As indicated in table 1.19 of the proposed programme budget, requirements for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General amount to $14,701,700 before recosting. Table 1.20 reflects the number of posts; for the biennium 1998-1999, the total number of regular budget posts is shown as 75 as compared with 77 for the previous biennium.

I.14. As indicated in paragraph 1.42, included in these estimates are resources related to the establishment of the Office of External Relations, consisting of an Assistant Secretary-General, supported by seven staff (one D-1, one P-5, one

P-4 and four General Service); the staffing of the new Office has been accommodated through redeployments from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

I.15. The Advisory Committee enquired about the functions of the various offices and units in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, in particular the Office of External Relations and the unit for Peace-building Strategies for Africa. The Committee was informed that although the functions of those offices were not entirely new, they have assumed significant importance as elements in the work of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The Committee draws attention to section II, paragraph 8, of General Assembly resolution 48/228 A of 23 December 1993, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that there was no duplication with the work of the other Secretariat units.

I.16. With regard to the other posts in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1.42 of the proposed programme budget that for the biennium 1998-1999 the following changes have been proposed: redeployment of an Assistant Secretary-General's post to the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in order to support the consolidation of the functions of the Secretary-General's Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women in that Department, in exchange for a post at the D-2 level; redeployment of one P-4 post to the Office of Human Resources Management; reclassification of the two Executive Assistants of the Secretary-General from the D-1 to the D-2 level; establishment of one P-3 post for a speech-writer to replace a P-4 post that was redeployed to the Office of External Relations, and abolition of two posts (one P-4 and one Security Service).

I.17. The Advisory Committee notes from table 1.19 of the proposed programme budget that there is an increase of 29.3 per cent over the previous biennium in the estimated requirements for consultants and experts. The resources requested for this purpose are $181,000 before recosting. The Committee believes that the request seems high given the explanation for the requirements in paragraph 1.44 of the proposed programme budget that expertise is needed to provide the Secretary-General with independent advice in such areas as preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, reconstruction, rehabilitation and development, communication and administrative and financial reform. The Committee trusts that the expertise available within the Organization will be fully utilized before resorting to outside expertise. In this connection, the Committee also draws attention to its comments in paragraph I.9 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.[1]

I.18. With regard to the Office of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva, the Advisory Committee notes that the total resources requested amount to $4,923,900 before recosting. The Committee notes from paragraphs 1.51 to 1.53 of the proposed programme budget that an explanation for the utilization of the 20 posts requested has been included.

I.19. Resources requested for the Office of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna, amount to $1,927,200 before recosting. The estimated requirements of $1,728,500 relating to posts reflect a negative growth of $345,100 for a reduced complement of 10 posts funded from the regular budget instead of 12 posts during the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in paragraph 1.62 of the proposed programme budget, the D-1 and P-5 posts that currently provide for the functions of Special Assistant to the Director-General and the Protocol and NGO Liaison Officer, respectively, have been proposed for

redeployment to section 14, Crime control. In exchange, two posts (one P-4 and one P-3) are proposed to be redeployed from section 14 to the Office of the Director-General. The Advisory Committee notes that the abolition of the posts of Secretary and Personal Assistant mentioned in paragraph 1.62 is in line with the Committee's recommendation to keep under review the ratio of General Service posts to those in the Professional category.

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform: measures and proposals (A/52/303)

The above report was issued subsequent to the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

At the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report, a decision still had not been reached on how the Secretary-General's reform proposals would be dealt with in the General Assembly. The Committee will therefore revert to consideration of document A/52/303 in due course.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1).

[2] Ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/48/7), para. I.6.

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

* The present document contains part II of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

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PART II. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Section 2. Political affairs

II.1. As shown in table 2.1 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General's estimate for section 2 for the biennium 1998-1999 amounts to $57,541,000 before recosting, a decrease of $2,138,700 from the 1996-1997 appropriations.

II.2. Also as indicated in table 2.1, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 1998-1999 are estimated at $5,044,900.

II.3. The Advisory Committee notes from the Secretary-General's proposals on reform as contained in document A/51/950, that it is intended to establish a Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation as well as a Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. The Committee understands that the resources proposed for those activities that are currently reflected under section 2 of the proposed programme budget will be transferred out of this section of the budget. Details are provided in document A/52/303.

II.4. As indicated in table 2.3, the total number of established regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 260, representing a decrease of 7 as compared with 267 such posts for the biennium 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee notes that the total number of temporary posts funded from the regular budget is 4, compared with 14 during the biennium 1996-1997. The total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for 1998-1999 remains the same as those for 1996-1997, namely, two. The Committee was informed that of the 17 regular posts (both established and temporary) proposed to be abolished, 13 were vacant as at July 1997.

II.5. As indicated in the footnote to table 2.3, two gratis personnel were contributed for the biennium 1996-1997, and it was anticipated that the same number would be contributed during 1998-1999. However, upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that they were two Junior Professional Officers and, as such, were gratis personnel, type I - one in the Assistant Secretary-General's office at Headquarters and the other in the Europe Division.

II.6. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the extrabudgetary staffing tables should indicate much more clearly the status (type) and full cost of gratis personnel. In this connection, the Committee points out that type I gratis personnel are also included in other sections of the budget for 1998-1999. The Committee recalls the information provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the support cost charges for gratis personnel (A/51/688/Add.1, paras. 15-17). In paragraph 10 of its resolution 51/243 of 15 September 1997 on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make proposals on the methodology and level of administrative support costs.

II.7. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997[1] it recommended that, although there had been considerable streamlining, the Secretary-General review the grade structure of the Department of Political Affairs, which was top-heavy. In this connection, the Committee notes that the proposed number of D-2 posts has been reduced from 10 in 1996-1997 to 8 for 1998-1999.

II.8. The Advisory Committee enquired as to possible duplication in the work of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Committee was informed that it would be impossible to avoid completely some duplication and that the principle of comparative advantage was being applied. The Committee was further informed that regular coordination meetings at all levels took place between the two departments.

II.9. Notwithstanding the above comments, the Advisory Committee, during its meetings with representatives of the Secretary-General, discussed several areas of duplication between the two departments, including activities related to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and Cyprus. Moreover, the Committee has noted an overlap in the desk officer system that is in effect in both departments. In this connection, the Committee recalls its comments made in its previous report.[2]

II.10. The Advisory Committee intends to revert to this matter. Further observations are provided in the context of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/303 (see below).

II.11. As indicated in paragraph 2.10 of the proposed programme budget, proposals under this section make adjustments for the need to strengthen coordination between the United Nations and the regional organizations with which it cooperates most closely in matters of peace and security and for the particularly pressing demands for the Organization to help prevent, control and resolve conflicts in Africa. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that, although it is not specifically detailed in the budget estimates, it is proposed to establish a liaison office in Addis Ababa with a staffing component of one post at the D-1 level and one Local level post, at an estimated cost of $352,400 before recosting.

II.12. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 2.129 that it is proposed that the three P-5 posts approved for the regional disarmament centres in Kathmandu, Lomé and Lima and two General Service posts at Headquarters be abolished, since the P-5 posts had not been filled since their approval, nor had voluntary contributions for the operations of the centres been made as expected. The Committee was informed that discussions were under way with UNDP for provision of some resources for consultancy purposes for the centre in Lomé and if the efforts were successful, then the question of abolishing the P-5 post for that centre would be reconsidered. In this connection, the Committee recalls its recommendation that the Secretary-General review the financial viability of those centres.[3] The Committee is of the opinion that the proposal of the Secretary-General to abolish the centres should be drawn to the attention of the First Committee and that before the General Assembly takes a decision on the matter, the Secretary-General should provide additional information on the status of voluntary contributions and, as concerns Lomé, the status of discussions with UNDP.

II.13. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 2.110 of the proposed programme budget that the abolition of one P-3 post has been proposed under subprogramme 7, Question of Palestine. The Committee has requested additional information relating to that proposal. It was informed that as at January 1996 one Professional post had been kept vacant as part of the effort to realize the savings required by the General Assembly during the biennium 1996-1997. The functions of the post (mainly organization of meetings of non-governmental organizations) were integrated with those of another post responsible for organizing regional seminars. At the same time, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People decided to combine some of

its symposia and seminars for which the Division for Palestinian Rights was mandated to provide servicing. Nonetheless, the Committee points out that the Assembly, in its resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995, requested that the staffing requirements of the Division be kept under review in the light of the developments in the Middle East. Under the circumstances, the Committee does not find a rationale for the abolition of the post.

II.14. As indicated in paragraph 2.14, provisions relating to the servicing of the General Assembly that were previously reflected under section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, are proposed for redeployment to the present section. The Advisory Committee notes from table 2.6 of the proposed programme budget that an amount of $412,900 before recosting (representing negative resource growth of 44.4 per cent) has been estimated to cover the direct costs of the fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions of the Assembly. However, as indicated in paragraph 2.15, while most of the Assembly's meetings are held from September to December, meetings are now held with increasing frequency during the rest of the year, and that trend is expected to increase in coming years, thus generating new requirements for the Secretariat.

II.15. As indicated in paragraph 2.42, the estimated requirements of $4,055,900 would provide for the staffing structure of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee notes that a growth in resources of $376,000 represents the combined effect of the application of the standard vacancy rates and the inward redeployment of a P-5 post. The Committee notes from paragraph 2.43, and also from an oral presentation to the Committee, that the additional P-5 post has been proposed for redeployment from subprogrammes 1 and 2 (General Assembly and Security Council) in order to assist with the Department's role as convener of the Executive Committee. Further comments on the redeployment of this post will be given in the context of its consideration of the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/52/303 (see below).

II.16. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 2.16 and 2.19 that the resources required for contractual services in connection with external printing to meet the needs of the General Assembly and the Security Council show negative growth of 80.7 and 80.2 per cent respectively as a result of greater use of in-house capabilities such as text-processing software and desktop publishing. The Committee welcomes that development and encourages greater efforts to further reduce or even eliminate the need for external printing through the astute utilization of advances in technology.

II.17. As noted in table 2.9, estimated resources of $402,300 before recosting would cover the cost of travel of the 25 representatives of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Travel and other activities, as outlined in paragraphs 2.25 and 2.29, are determined by the Special Committee itself, and the resource growth of $177,100 indicated in paragraph 2.29 represents the partial restoration of provisions that had existed in the initial 1996-1997 appropriation but were surrendered owing to the reductions effected in 1996.

II.18. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 2.79 of the proposed programme budget that requirements for general temporary assistance ($86,500) relate to the elimination of the accumulated backlog in the preparation of the Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council covering the years since 1989 and the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs since 1979, for which a minimum of approximately 12 work-months at the P-4 level has been requested. The Committee was informed that these publications suffer from serious delays

owing to a lack of adequate staff resources; for the Repertory in particular, the delays are compounded because of delays from the submitting departments, which also lack adequate staff resources. As indicated in paragraph 2.82, estimated requirements of $36,300 have been requested to cover specialized indexing services for the French edition of the eighth supplement of the Repertoire, which has been prepared, as well as for the ninth supplement when that has been translated. The Committee doubts whether the requested amounts of $86,500 and $36,300 would be adequate to deal with the accumulated backlog. The Committee recommends that the matter be reviewed to consider measures similar to those taken by the Office of Legal Affairs in dealing with the backlog in the publication of the Treaty Series.

II.19. The Advisory Committee upon enquiry was informed that there was a problem with some recurrent publications such as the Repertoire, the Disarmament Yearbook, official records of the Security Council and others. While the English versions may be completed on time, the time-frame for translation into other languages ranges from approximately 11 months for the French version to three years for the Arabic and Chinese versions. The Committee was informed that the level of resources requested would be sufficient only to maintain the status quo; there are no means to reduce the current backlog. The Committee trusts that the Secretariat will immediately introduce the measures necessary to ensure timely translation of documentation into all official languages; the Secretary-General should make proposals in this regard to the General Assembly before December 1997.

II.20. As indicated in paragraph 2.66, since 1992 the United Nations has received 125 requests for electoral assistance from Member States. In recent experience United Nations electoral assistance has been geared more to smaller missions that provide technical assistance to the electoral authorities of the Member State concerned with coordinating support provided by others or to providing a symbolic United Nations presence, compared with the large missions of prior years that organized, conducted or observed the elections. The Advisory Committee requested additional information on the number of such technical assistance requests received and the number of assessment missions dispatched in response to such requests. It was informed that in 1995, out of 22 requests for assistance received, 17 were responded to; in 1996, out of 27 requests received, 14 were replied to positively or were under consideration at the end of the year. Assistance was not provided in cases involving requests received with insufficient lead time (i.e., less than three months before an election) or where the political conditions in the country were not sufficiently conducive to the holding of genuine and periodic elections.

II.21. The Advisory Committee recommends that the narrative portion of the submission be updated in certain areas. For example, the Committee notes that in paragraphs 2.97 and 2.100, bodies that have completed their work have been included in the narrative. Furthermore, as indicated in paragraph 2.92, a P-4 post has been proposed for redeployment to serve as secretary of one of the working groups of the General Assembly. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the working group referred to was the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. However, following the transfer of all technical servicing functions from the Department of Political Affairs to the new Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the utilization and functions of this post would be subject to the decision of the head of the new Department.

II.22. In the report on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (A/51/873), it was indicated that owing to a reduction in the number of meetings identified as excessive there would be a savings of $188,000 for the Department of Political Affairs. Additional savings would be realized through the use of in-house drafting and editing and a reduction in the size of the Disarmament Yearbook and Disarmament Periodic Review. Similar information regarding the streamlining of publications was also contained in the Secretary-General's report on the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/C.5/50/57/Add.1) and reflected in the second report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.[4] The Committee regrets however, that such savings are not clearly identified in the proposed programme budget submission as they should relate to the requests for the biennium 1998-1999.

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform: measures and proposals (A/52/303)

The above report was issued subsequent to the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

At the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report, a decision still had not been reached on how the Secretary-General's reform proposals would be dealt with in the General Assembly. The Committee will therefore revert to consideration of document A/52/303 in due course.

Section 3. Peacekeeping operations and special missions

II.23. As shown in table 3.2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, the Secretary-General's estimate for section 3 for 1998-1999 amounts to $89,703,500 before recosting, a decrease of $45,801,800 against the 1996-1997 appropriations. The Advisory Committee understands that the reason for the decrease in resources is mainly due to the fact that resources for ad hoc missions have been reflected only up to 31 March 1998.

II.24. Also indicated in table 3.2, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 1998-1999 are estimated at $54,193,200. Thus, the estimated resource requirements for the biennium total $153,672,100 as compared to $186,689,100 for 1996-1997.

II.25. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General should present proposals on the total requirements from all sources of funding so as to give the Department of Peacekeeping Operations the capacity to implement fully all mandated programmes and activities.

II.26. As indicated in table 3.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 355, representing a decrease of 37 as compared with 392 posts for 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee notes from the same table that the number of temporary posts funded from the regular budget is 4, a decrease of 33 posts as compared with 37 in 1996-1997. Also as shown in table 3.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 224, representing a decrease of 2 as compared with 226 posts for 1996-1997. Of the 37 regular posts proposed to be abolished, the Committee was informed that 6 were vacant as at 1 July 1997.

II.27. In addition, 134 gratis personnel are indicated in footnote a to table 3.3. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its report of 28 February 1997 (A/51/813), it had recommended that gratis personnel be phased out; the Secretary-general has also indicated that a plan would be developed to phase out the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat at the earliest possible date (see A/51/950). In this connection, the Committee recalls General Assembly resolution 51/243 of 15 September 1997 on gratis personnel. It will therefore be necessary for the Secretary-General to assess the impact of this development on the support account and under the regular budget. However, there was no indication in the budget submission and the Secretariat was unable to provide information regarding the period over which the phasing out would take place and what resource implications it would entail for the Department's funding under either the regular budget or the support account.

II.28. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 3.17 (e) that the Situation Centre contains no regular budget posts. In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its recommendation that the time has come to evaluate the operation of the Situation Centre and its resource requirements, including its cost-effectiveness, and that the results of the evaluation be reflected in the next budget submission of the Secretary-General on the support account for peacekeeping operations (see A/51/906 and Corr.1, para. 18).

II.29. The Advisory Committee requested additional information regarding coordination between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, especially regarding operations in the same area.

II.30. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 3.19 of the proposed programme budget that an amount of $93,300 is proposed for consultancy services. As indicated in paragraph 3.19 (a), the Department had developed distinctive information and communication links with the peacekeeping and political missions in the field and would require consultancy services to examine and make recommendations, inter alia, on the most cost-effective ways of integrating current systems and ensuring evolution towards common longer-term standards in communications. While the Committee welcomes such an initiative, it recommends that coordination with other departments, especially with the Department of Management, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs be ensured to maintain a unified United Nations communications network.

II.31. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 3.19 (b) that part of the request for consultancy services is proposed to be utilized for a consultant to undertake a study, over a period of four months, to draw lessons from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed forces programmes carried out by past and ongoing peacekeeping missions. The Committee points out that there is a Lessons Learned Unit within the Department, staff by a D-1 and a General Service post. The Committee believes that there is a need for the administration to clarify the approach it intends to follow in performing lessons-learned activities. The Secretary-General had submitted related proposals in his report contained in document A/51/890 (annex I, para. 30). In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its comments in its report on the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/51/906 and Corr.1, para. 21). The Committee also recalls General Assembly resolution 51/239 A of 16 July 1997, in which the Secretary-General was requested to submit further proposals on the subject for its consideration. The Committee considered the proposals resubmitted by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document

A/51/965 and submitted its comments to the Assembly, which adopted resolution 51/239 B of 15 September 1997.

II.32. As indicated in paragraph 3.21 of the proposed programme budget, a provision of $52,700 has been requested to cover the cost of translation of documents such as peacekeeping studies, mission operating guidelines and claims from Member States into the official languages of the Organization.

II.33. As indicated in paragraph 3.22 of the proposed programme budget, resources amounting to $1,269,500 have been requested for general operating expenses. An amount of $260,100 would provide for rental of photocopying machines. Included in the estimates are provisions of $52,100 for paper and other reproduction supplies. In view of the availability of desktop publishing facilities, the Advisory Committee believes that the use of photocopiers and related supplies could be reduced. The requirement of a code to use photocopying machines could also be introduced.

II.34. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 3.22 (d) that $197,100 would cover the cost of maintaining office automation equipment; provisions requested under the regular budget relate to maintenance and software costs for 140 personal computers. In addition, the Department has an inventory of 426 personal computers, of which 26 are already obsolete. The Committee notes that the report of the Secretary-General on the support account for peacekeeping operations contained a request for resources for maintenance of 22 personal computers against the support account (A/51/890, annex I, para. 48).

II.35. With regard to the replacement of personal computers, as indicated in paragraph 3.25 (b) of the proposed programme budget, 55 personal computers are proposed to be replaced; furthermore, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, provision for replacement of 45 personal computers had been requested (A/51/890, annex I, para. 52).

II.36. As indicated in table 3.2 of the proposed programme budget, extrabudgetary resources amounting to $1,530,700 have been approved as general operating expenses against the support account with a provision for personal computers.

II.37. The Advisory Committee enquired but was not able to ascertain the number of personal computers, of the total of 426, purchased against regular budget funds and the number purchased against the support account. The Committee was also not able to reconcile the number of personal computers with the number of regular budget staff indicated in table 3.3.

II.38. In the report on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (A/51/873), it was indicated that because of the use of time chartering instead of voyage chartering of vessels, savings of over $21 million had been achieved for the Department; an estimated savings of $10 million to $20 million per year is envisaged in this connection. The Department also saved $1.7 million for 1996 through the improved selection and training of police monitors. The Advisory Committee requested further details on this point, including the manner in which the savings were reprogrammed. While the Committee was provided with detailed information on how the savings were achieved, including economies of scale through the time charter of vessels and a reduction in mission subsistence allowance and travel costs through improvements in the selection and training of police monitors, it was not provided with an explanation of how those savings were reprogrammed in the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999.

II.39. The same also indicates that by the end of 1997 savings would be achieved through the use of an established vehicle fleet database, global direct provisioning for vehicle spares and requests for purchase of centralized/ standardized vehicles. Over a five-year period, the use of standardized vehicles is estimated to save $50 million to $70 million; centralized disposals are estimated to save $30 million to $40 million; and global direct provisioning for spares is estimated to save $20 million. While the Advisory Committee was provided with details on how savings were to be achieved in this regard, it did not receive an explanation on how the resources would be reprogrammed in the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999.

II.40. The Advisory Committee notes that three trust funds are mentioned in table 3.4, whereas in paragraph 3.32 (c) it is stated that during the biennium 1998-1999, the activities to be undertaken would include the management of 24 trust funds and the development of a trust fund database to ensure availability of timely management information, including cost plans and allotment requests. The Committee was informed that those 24 trust funds were administered in the field. The Committee welcomes the action by the Department with regard to development of a database for this purpose. The Committee was also informed that there was a trust fund unit in the Accounts Division for similar purposes, as well as one in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for managing its trust funds. The Committee recommends that there be Secretariat-wide coordination in this regard, and also draws attention to its comments under section 27, Administrative services, on simplification of financial statements, including trust funds and related schedules, which should be made more user-friendly.

II.41. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its previous report,[5] it had welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to streamline the administrative structure and activities of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which had resulted in a net reduction of $8,614,500. The Committee notes from paragraph 3.45 of the proposed programme budget that during the current biennium similar initiatives have been undertaken. As indicated in paragraph 3.46, the estimates include proposals for the abolition of 23 posts (8 in the Field Service category and 15 at the Local level). The Committee was informed that for various reasons, including the fact that UNTSO has been used as a "resource base" for supplying staff to other newer and more dynamic missions and the need to meet the mandated vacancy rate of 6.4 per cent, the mission has had a high vacancy rate. The resource growth of $696,000 for posts indicated in table 3.18 reflects the application of the new standard vacancy rates.

II.42. With regard to the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), the Advisory Committee notes from table 3.21 as well as paragraph 3.55 of the proposed programme budget that a reduction of seven posts (four in the Field Service category and three at the Local level) has been proposed. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the mission had a high vacancy rate, over and above the 6.4 per cent requirement. With regard to the request for the establishment of a Political Affairs Officer post at the P-4 level for the biennium 1998-1999, the Committee was informed that following a further review of the administrative arrangements and the staffing situation in UNMOGIP, it had been concluded that the establishment of that post was no longer necessary and that the Secretary-General had withdrawn his proposal.

II.43. The Advisory Committee notes in table 3.27 that an amount of $7,908,100 has been requested for financing of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala. The Committee notes from paragraphs 3.3 and 3.78 of the proposed programme budget that the estimated requirements would cover the period from

1 January to 31 March 1998 only. In this connection the Committee points out that in its response to the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/51/47) in which he conveyed the same information, the Committee stated that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 continued to apply, including those dealing with the treatment of additional expenditures related to peace and security. Bearing in mind that the Mission would be likely to continue until the end of 2000, the Committee indicated that it expected the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 to include resources for the financing of the Mission for the biennium. The Committee regrets that the Secretary-General has not followed the recommended procedure in this case.

II.44. The Advisory Committee notes the information pertaining to ad hoc missions in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.88. As indicated, resources for those activities in the amount of $23,882,900 were granted by the General Assembly for the biennium 1996-1997. The Committee notes the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 3.88 that the activities would either have been completed in that biennium or would be of an extraordinary nature and, as such, their extension could not be foreseen at the present time. Therefore, no provision had been made for those activities in the 1998-1999 proposals.

II.45. The Advisory Committee requested a breakdown of the amount of $23,882,900 and was provided with the following information:

Ad hoc missions	1996-1997 appropriations (thousands of United States dollars)
Programme budget implication statements submitted prior to the adoption of resolutions or revised estimates arising from decisions of the Security Council:	
Central American peace process	629.5
United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan	5 665.2
International Commission of Inquiry in Rwanda	1 186.1
United Nations International Civilian Mission in Haiti	9 770.8
Office of the Secretary-General in Burundi	1 841.5
Political presence in El Salvador	2 154.1
Subtotal	21 247.2
Authorized by the Secretary-General under the authority granted to him by the General Assembly in resolutions on unforeseen and extraordinary expenditures and reported in the performance report:	
Secretary-General's Special Representative in Cambodia	567.6
United Nations Political Office for Somalia	946.1
Special Envoy for Tajikistan	57.5
Special Envoy for Sierra Leone	369.2
Special Envoy for Georgia	134.8

Ad hoc missions	1996-1997 appropriations (thousands of United States dollars)
Technical mission to Zaire	90.3
Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the controversy between Guyana and Venezuela	29.2
Human rights fact-finding mission to Nigeria	163.1
Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria	16.5
Goodwill mission to the Bakassi Peninsula	46.6
Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region of Central Africa	183.8
Mission to Sudan	31.0
Subtotal	2 635.7
Total	23 882.9

II.46. The Advisory Committee understands that additional missions of this nature envisaged for the near future are likely to cost a further $21 million, financing for which would be handled in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213.

Section 4. Peaceful uses of outer space

II.47. As shown in table 4.1 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, the Secretary-General's estimate for section 4 amounts to $4,380,400 before recosting, an increase of $204,000 against the 1996-1997 appropriations.

II.48. As also shown in table 4.1, extrabudgetary resources for the biennium are estimated at $460,000. Thus, the estimated resources and requirements for the biennium total $4,888,900.

II.49. As indicated in paragraph 4.10, the increase results mainly from the proposal for an increase of $45,700 for general temporary assistance for the meetings of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees and for staffing requirements for preparation for the special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). As indicated in paragraph 4.15, the estimated requirements of $22,700 would provide for the replacement of office automation equipment, while the resource growth of $13,200 is due to the fact this amount was previously included under section 26G, Administration, Vienna, and has now been proposed for redeployment to section 4.

II.50. As indicated in table 4.2, post requirements for 1998-1999 total 18, a decrease of one from 1996-1997. The 18 posts comprise 13 established posts in the Professional category and above and 5 at the General Service level; no posts are funded from extrabudgetary resources.

II.51. The Advisory Committee notes the programme of work described in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7. The Committee requested and obtained details of programme indicators and outputs for the bienniums 1994-1995 and 1996-1997, as well as the proposed outputs for the biennium 1998-1999. From the information provided to it, the Committee believes that more has been programmed and more reports projected than can reasonably be implemented with the resources available.

II.52. While it was not possible to identify all the expenditures expected to be incurred in the preparation of UNISPACE III, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Committee recognized and agreed that all efforts should be made to keep the cost of UNISPACE III within existing resources by curtailing the documentation for and the duration of the sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies during the year of the Conference.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7, and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1), para. II.4.

[2] Ibid., para. II.15.

[3] Ibid., para. II.13, and A/50/7/Add.12.

[4] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/51/7 and addenda), document A/51/7/Add.1, annex 2.

[5] Ibid., Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1), para. II.31.

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

Part III. International justice and law

III.1. Part III of the proposed programme budget covers section 5, International Court of Justice ($22,077,000), and section 6, Legal affairs ($37,436,100).

Section 5. International Court of Justice

III.2. The estimate for section 5 for the biennium 1998-1999 amounts to $21,516,900 before recosting, which constitutes an increase of $1,531,000 compared with the 1996-1997 appropriations.

III.3. As indicated in paragraph 5.8 of the proposed programme budget, the estimates relating to the statutory entitlements of the members of the Court are scheduled for a comprehensive review by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. The resources proposed in subsection A, based on existing rates, are therefore provisional. Any changes resulting from decisions taken by the Assembly at its fifty-third session with regard to emoluments and other conditions of service for the members of the Court will be reported in the performance report for the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

* The present document contains part III of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

III.4. The Advisory Committee was informed that, at present, the Court has 11 resident and 4 non-resident judges. There are also 14 ad hoc judges.

III.5. The Advisory Committee notes from table 5.2 of the proposed programme budget that the bulk of the 7.6 per cent increase in section 5 results from resource growth of $703,400 for temporary assistance for meetings (recruitment and travel of freelance interpreters, translators and stenographer-typists). The Committee was informed that a portion of those temporary funds was required for the translation services formerly provided by two P-4 staff on temporary posts. The Committee was informed that many cases involved thousands of pages of word processing and is of the opinion that if the workload continues to increase it may be necessary to examine the cost-effectiveness of providing temporary services against that of using staff on board. The current workload includes nine cases, with the possibility of the addition of two new ones during the coming biennium.

III.6. The Advisory Committee also notes the resource growth of $450,400 in contractual services for the coming biennium related to printing of the Court's publications and translation of the Court's documents. The Committee was informed that the intent was to restore resources to the level of 1994-1995, before the reduction during 1996-1997 necessitated by the economy measures. Furthermore, the resources requested reflect an attempt only to prevent the existing backlog, which dates back 10 years, from increasing any further, not to reduce it.

III.7. Although the Advisory Committee was informed of the limitations in the use of new technology, namely, that electronic records are not yet considered an alternative to hard copies of the judicial pronouncements, it recommends that the Court explore vigorously the introduction of modern technology, including methods used by regional and national judicial systems, as well as the experience of the Office of Legal Affairs in reducing its own backlog in the publication of treaties, with a view to improving and modernizing its capacity for storage, publication, retrieval and distribution of Court documents.

III.8. The Advisory Committee also believes that the General Assembly should encourage Member States to provide their own pleadings in the official languages of the Court (French and English) so that translation resources can be dedicated to the translation of the judicial rulings of the Court.

III.9. Paragraph 5.22 of the proposed programme budget indicates requirements of $2,695,100 for general operating expenses, including a resource growth of $601,000. Of that amount, $485,800 relates to an increase for the additional space used by the Court in the Peace Palace at The Hague. The Carnegie Foundation has requested that the contribution paid by the United Nations for the use of the premises of the Court be increased by 2.5 per cent in each year of the coming biennium. The Committee sought additional explanation regarding the basis for the request for that increase and what the 2.5 per cent rate represented. It was informed that the rate was based on price and wage data from the Central Plan Bureau (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis), in particular, the cost of government consumption, which integrates two components: wages and salaries of government employees and the cost of public administration buildings. The Bureau estimated price increases for public administration buildings of 2.8 per cent for 1997 and 2.5 per cent for 1998, while for private enterprise buildings the estimated price increase is 2.5 per cent for both 1997 and 1998.

III.10. The Advisory Committee notes, therefore, that the rate corresponds to the real estate inflation rate at The Hague, while the general inflation rate for cost of living applied at The Hague by the United Nations is 1.9 per cent. Furthermore, the Committee notes that specific inflation rates are not used in any other duty stations for the maintenance of premises. However, the Committee recalls in this regard that the General Assembly, in its resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995, accepted the proposal made by the Committee in its report on conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials,[1] indicating that the provision on inflation would be subject to review by the Committee and approval by the Assembly each time it was requested.

III.11. As indicated in paragraph 5.15 of the proposed programme budget, the estimated requirements of $8,203,100 provide for the continuation of 57 posts: 54 established posts (22 at the Professional and 32 at the General Service level) and 3 General Service temporary posts. The Advisory Committee was informed of three vacancies, comprising one P-5, one P-2 and one General Service at the time of the hearings.

III.12. The Advisory Committee sought further information on the implementation of recommendations made by the External Auditors on various issues related to the travel estimates for the Court as well as overhead costs incurred by the United Nations in arbitration cases, as indicated in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.[2] In this regard, the Committee was informed that the External Auditors, in the context of the interim audit of the financial statements of the Court for the biennium ended in 1995, had made observations on the insufficiency of explanation pertaining to particular trips undertaken by some members of the Court. The Committee was assured, however, that the Registrar had provided clarification on those specific cases and that measures had been taken to ensure that cost justifications were provided in travel authorizations. The Committee was further informed that the issue of overhead costs incurred by the United Nations in arbitration cases was not among the issues covered by the External Auditors.

Section 6. Legal affairs

III.13. As shown in table 6.2 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General's estimate for section 6 for 1998-1999 amounts to $31,791,300 before recosting, showing an increase of $1,536,800 against the 1996-1997 appropriations. In addition, an amount of $3,957,300 is shown under extrabudgetary resources. The Advisory Committee notes the considerable increase in the requirements under contractual services - from $1.1 million for 1996-1997 to $2.4 million in 1998-1999. The specific amounts, relating to external printing under each subprogramme, are indicated in paragraphs 6.19, 6.27, 6.68 and 6.114 of the proposed programme budget.

III.14. As indicated in paragraph 6.3, according to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001,[3] the overall objectives of programme 4, Legal affairs, are to provide a unified central legal service for the Secretariat and the principal and other organs of the United Nations. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls its comments made in its first report on the programme budget for 1996-1997[4] regarding the need to ensure that procedures are in place so that any legal advice given by officers carrying out legal functions in the Secretariat other than in the Office of Legal Affairs - including those serving in peacekeeping operations - is consistent with the practice of the United Nations Legal Counsel.

III.15. As indicated in paragraph 6.15, the International Law Commission is to consider during its 1997 session whether to have a split session of five weeks in Geneva and five weeks in New York. Although the Advisory Committee was informed that such a session would affect the cost only marginally, it believes that other factors such as the meeting capacity at headquarters, which is already saturated, should be taken into consideration.

III.16. As indicated in table 6.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 142, representing a decrease of 3 regular budget posts as compared with the total of 145 for 1996-1997. As indicated in the same table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for 1998-1999 is 16 - two less than the total for 1996-1997. Of the three regular budget posts proposed to be abolished, the Advisory Committee was informed that they had been vacant for most of the current biennium.

III.17. The Advisory Committee queried savings of $9,000 per volume reported in the report entitled "UN 21: accelerating managerial reform for results" (A/51/873) with regard to the publishing of the Treaty Series Cumulative Index. The Committee was informed that no funds were available for release in this regard since the results had been achieved through the use of new technology, thus allowing for an increase in printing and clearing of the backlog within existing funds allocated for the period.

III.18. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that in past years part of the amount allocated for publication of the Monthly Statement of Treaties, the United Nations Treaty Series and the Treaty Series Cumulative Index was returned to the budget unutilized. That was the result of a sharp increase in the workload associated with the number of treaties and related publications, as well as the laborious and inefficient process involved. However, from 1995 onwards, the pace of publication picked up considerably: 28 volumes were published in 1993; 27 were published in 1994; in 1995 publication almost doubled to 58 volumes; 60 were produced in 1996; and 70 and 80 have been forecast for 1997 and 1998 respectively. Through a new multifaceted approach, which includes a major computerization and training programme, the Office of Legal Affairs plans to eliminate the backlog of the Treaty Series in three years, the Monthly Statement of Treaties in less time and the Treaty Series Cumulative Index within three years.

III.19. The Advisory Committee was informed, therefore, that the high expenditure associated with external printing would constitute a one-time cost - once the backlog was cleared, that high level of resources would not be required again. The Committee was also informed that the internal printing capacity could not handle such a large volume at present, in terms of the quantity and size of the volumes themselves. The Office envisages, however, a move from external typesetting to the repro-copying of treaties for publication and to desktop publishing - a technique already utilized in the Depositary Functions Unit and the Indexing Unit, as indicated in paragraph 6.104 of the proposed budget for 1998-1999. The Committee welcomes this information.

III.20. As indicated in paragraph 6.9 of the proposed budget, a total of five posts (4 Professional and 1 General Service) are being redeployed from the Office of Conference and Support Services to the Treaty Section in relation to subprogramme 6. The establishment of a P-3 post is proposed under programme support to provide common service to the Office of Legal Affairs in the area of systems analysis, with responsibilities for information systems, database design and development of office automation. Furthermore, as explained in paragraph 6.36, the proposal to reclassify a D-1 regular budget post to the D-2

level would accommodate the Director and Deputy to the Legal Counsel, who currently occupies a D-2 post funded from extrabudgetary resources. The latter D-2 post would accordingly be downgraded to the D-1 level. The Advisory Committee recommends this reclassification, which, in view of the functions of the post, should more appropriately be funded under the regular budget.

III.21. The abolition of six Professional posts and three General Service posts is also proposed in connection with subprogramme 4, Law of the sea and ocean affairs, in view of the restructuring of the programme of work related to the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Advisory Committee requested additional information regarding the functions of the posts involved, in view of the heavy workload, and requests for consultancies and other staff costs. It is the view of the Committee that the core functions of the Office of Legal Affairs are better performed by experienced staff, acquainted with United Nations practice, on a permanent rather than a temporary basis.

III.22. The Advisory Committee reiterates its comments made in its previous report[5] recommending that the Secretary-General review the adequacy of reimbursements from extrabudgetary activities. It also reiterates its view that subscribers such as law firms and libraries should pay for the Yearbook of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.[6]

III.23. As indicated in paragraph 6.47(b)(ii) of the proposed programme budget, assistance will be provided by the General Legal Division in relation to procurement of supplies and services for peacekeeping, observer, humanitarian, good-offices, emergency and other special missions and the settlement of disputes and claims for property damage, personal injury and death. The Advisory Committee requested information on the amounts paid to lawyers and firms, nationalities and fees involved. The Committee intends to examine this matter in the context of its review of the report of the Secretary-General on the matter.

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform: measures and proposals (A/52/303)

The above report was issued subsequent to the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

As shown in tables 6.1 and 6.2 of that report, the financial consequences of the Secretary-General's actions and recommendations relating to section 6 would be a reclassification of a D-2 post in the Office of the Legal Counsel to the Assistant Secretary-General level and an increase of $48,100 from $31,791,300 to $31,839,400 before recosting.

At the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report, a decision still had not been reached on how the Secretary-General's reform would be dealt with in the General Assembly. The Committee will therefore revert to consideration of document A/52/303 in due course.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/50/7 and addenda), document A/50/7/Add.11.

[2] Ibid., Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1), para. III.4.

[3] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6 and corrigendum (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1).

[4] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1), para. III.24.

[5] Ibid., para. III.19.

[6] Ibid., para. III.20.

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First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

PART IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

IV.1. Under sections 7 to 15 (part IV) of the proposed programme budget, provisions of $294,792,100 (before recosting) are included for international cooperation and development. These comprise the proposed estimates for the Department for policy coordination and sustainable development ($43,137,200) in section 7; Africa: New Agenda for Development ($5,087,000) in section 8; the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis ($48,702,700) in section 9; the Department for Development Support and Management Services ($26,075,000) in section 10; UNCTAD ($107,470,900) in section 11A; the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO ($22,326,600) in section 11B; UNEP ($8,582,500) in section 12; the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) ($11,795,600) in section 13; crime control ($5,411,300) in section 14; and international drug control ($16,203,300) in section 15.

* The present document contains part IV of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

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Sections 7, 9 and 10. Policy coordination and sustainable development; Economic and social information and policy analysis; and Development support and management services

IV.2. The Advisory Committee recalls that in his letter dated 17 March 1997 to the President of the General Assembly (A/51/829) the Secretary-General indicated:

> "Integrating support for policy formulation, analytical and normative functions and relevant technical cooperation activities will serve to reinforce the necessary critical mass available at Headquarters for this indispensable aspect of the work of the Organization and the overall effectiveness of the Secretariat ... The Secretariat has a central role in integrating substantive support to the concerned intergovernmental bodies, but this role is now diffused among the three Headquarters Departments mentioned above [i.e. the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services]."

Accordingly, the Secretary-General announced that those three Departments would be merged into a single department and some of the functions and activities of the Department for Development Support and Management Services would be redistributed. The Committee was informed that revised budget estimates would be submitted for a single department. In that connection, the Committee notes that following its discussions with representatives of the Secretary-General on the subject, in his report of 11 September 1997 (A/52/303, paras. 7A.1-7A.60), the Secretary-General has outlined the programmatic and financial consequences of the actions and recommendations relating to the work of a new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the rationale for which was described in his letter of 17 March 1997 to the President of the General Assembly (A/51/829) and in his report of 14 July 1997 (A/51/950, paras. 138-142).

IV.3. The Secretary-General's estimates for sections 7, 9 and 10 amount to $117,914,900 for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services, or about 4.8 per cent of the total budget of $2,479,298,600 (before recosting). The provisions reflect a resource growth of $1,198,900, or a 2.8 per cent increase for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and $1,426,500 or 3.0 per cent for the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and a decrease in resources of $736,400 or 2.7 per cent for the Department for Development support and Management Services, as compared with 1996-1997 appropriations. Projected extrabudgetary resources for 1998-1999 amount to $12,738,000 as compared with estimates of $19,609,200 for 1996-1997 or a 35 per cent decrease for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, $7,526,200 as compared with $6,681,500 for 1996-1997 or 12.6 per cent increase for the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and $163,770,700 as compared with $164,653,900 or a 0.5 per cent decrease for 1996-1997 for the Department for Development Support and Management Services (tables 7.1, 9.1 and 10.1). Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that a further decrease in extrabudgetary resources was expected as a result of a 50 per cent reduction in the UNFPA contributions to the Department for Economic and Social Information

and Policy Analysis. The Committee notes with concern the decrease in the projections of extrabudgetary resources for 1998-1999.

IV.4. As indicated in paragraph 7.2, in 1998-1999, the programme of work of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development includes facilitation and promotion of enhanced policy coordination and greater cooperation and collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system in the economic and social areas, in particular, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary bodies. In that connection, the Advisory Committee requested information on the number of meetings held and the cost of the machinery of the Administrative Committee. The Advisory Committee was informed that in 1997 the Administrative Committee and its 20 subsidiary committees and subcommittees would hold 185 meetings (83 days); however, no information was provided with respect to the number of meetings planned for 1998-1999 and their cost implications. As regards conference services provided to the meetings of those bodies, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Administrative Committee itself required simultaneous interpretation and translation of documents in English and French, but that subsidiary bodies worked in English only. The meetings of the Administrative Committee and its subsidiary bodies were held on a rotation basis in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and other United Nations offices, as well as at the headquarters of the specialized agencies. The Committee is of the view that the number of meetings and the cost of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its machinery should be more transparent. To that end, the Committee requests the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to include in the next budget information in that regard, as well as information on the subsidiary machinery of the Committee.

IV.5. As indicated in table 7.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for the biennium 1998-1999 is 196 (113 Professional and 83 General Service), representing a decrease of 15 regular budget posts (4 Professional and 11 General Service), as compared with the total of 211 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 7.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 24 (18 Professional and 6 General Service), representing an increase of 2 extrabudgetary posts (1 Professional and 1 General Service), as compared with the total of 22 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997.

IV.6. In addition, the Committee was informed that two gratis personnel (type 1), one P-5 and one P-4/3, for the Global Modelling Forum and Agenda 21, respectively, were expected to continue during the biennium 1998-1999. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development had 26 vacant posts (18 Professional and 8 General Service). The Advisory Committee notes the high number of vacant Professional posts.

IV.7. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 7.8 and 7.83 and tables 7.3 and 7.18 that, as at 31 December 1998, the resources related to combating desertification, particularly in Africa (sect. 7, subprogramme 5), would be discontinued. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/180 of 16 December 1996, the resources proposed under subprogramme 5 for the interim secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, represented the requirements for the activities to be undertaken in 1998 only. The Committee points out that the 11 posts under subprogramme 5 (one D-2, one D-1, three P-3/4, one P-5 and five General Service) are not included in the

staffing tables of section 7. The Committee is of the view that the information presented with regard to the post requirements in section 7 lacks transparency and is potentially misleading. The Committee believes that the 11 posts should have been reflected under subprogramme 5 in the corresponding staffing tables of section 7, indicating in footnotes that the financing of those posts would be discontinued as at 31 December 1998 (see chap. I, para. 73). Furthermore, the Committee requests that the Secretary-General, in the context of the next programme budget, provide information on current and envisaged arrangements, if any, with conventions served by the United Nations.

IV.8. With respect to the programme of work of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for 1998-1999, the Advisory Committee sought clarification on the extent to which intergovernmental bodies that oversee the work of the Department (e.g. the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Social Development) have examined the programmatic proposals of the Secretary-General. The Committee was informed that intergovernmental bodies had taken note of the relevant Department's programme of work, with the exception of the programme on combating desertification. In the case of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development, a few specific comments were also made.[1] The Committee was provided with a list of parliamentary documentation for each major organ, indicating the type of servicing projected for 1998-1999, as well as a tabulation of the actual meetings held and reports submitted in 1994-1995, under implementation in 1996-1997 and estimated for 1998-1999.

IV.9. The Advisory Committee requested information on the impact that the budget reductions in 1996-1997 had on the implementation of the Department's mandated work programme and as to how the Secretary-General intended to dispose in 1998-1999 of those outputs deferred, postponed or curtailed in 1996-1997. The Committee was provided with information on the impact that the reductions had on the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women and on that of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs (see also A/C.5/51/53, paras. 24 and 25). The Committee notes that the mandated activities for the advancement of women were significantly curtailed and that in a number of areas the scope of work in 1998-1999 would be at the 1996-1997 level. The Committee is of the view that the resources requested by the Secretary-General for the Department for 1998-1999 may be limited in relation to the proposed programme of work and that, consequently, there may be built-in inefficiencies and constraints to carrying out the work programme successfully in 1998-1999. Furthermore, in the Committee's opinion, it is not clear from the information received that the Secretariat had sought the guidance on this matter from the relevant intergovernmental bodies that oversee the work of the Department.

IV.10. As indicated in paragraph 7.41 (c) (iii), the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development will maintain liaison, as required, with 1,700 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. In paragraph 7.36, the Secretary-General has requested an amount of $399,000 as a contribution by the United Nations to the financing of the activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service for 1998-1999. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that, owing to the sharp increase in the number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with Economic and Social Council (from 1,500 in 1996-1997 to 1,700 in 1998-1999) and the resource constraints in 1996-1997, the Department had found it impossible adequately to fulfil the mandate of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 to strengthen United Nations/non-governmental organization relations through more interactive processes such as seminars and conferences.

The Advisory Committee is aware that budgetary provisions related to non-governmental organizations are contained in other sections of the budget. In that connection, the Committee requested information on the total level of resources proposed for non-governmental organizations for the biennium 1998-1999. The Committee regrets that such information was not provided.

IV.11. The Advisory Committee believes that the time has come to appraise the impact on the United Nations programme budget of the large increase in non-governmental organizations involved in the work of the United Nations since administration and cost implications will become more critical in view of the financial constraints facing the Organization.

IV.12. As indicated in table 9.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis for the biennium 1998-1999 is 258 (142 Professional and 116 General Service), representing a decrease of 20 regular budget posts (6 Professional and 14 General Service), as compared with the total of 278 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 9.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 30 (21 Professional and 9 General Service), representing an increase of one extrabudgetary post as compared with the total of 29 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997. In addition, the Committee was informed that gratis personnel contributed for 1996-1997, that is, one P-5 for advice in the area of national accounts and three P-4/3 for macroeconomics and statistical work, were expected to continue in the biennium 1998-1999. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Department had 38 vacant posts (27 Professional and 11 General Service).

IV.13. The programme of work of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis derives its legislative authority from a broad body of intergovernmental mandates provided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and its Statistical Commission and Commission on Population and Development. Furthermore, as indicated in paragraph 9.3, some new dimensions have been added to its programme by the action programmes adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

IV.14. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Department's work programme had been reviewed and endorsed by its intergovernmental bodies. However, as indicated in chapter I with regard to the budget as a whole, the Committee points out that it is not clear from the Secretary-General's budget proposal what programme activities and outputs were proposed in direct response to specific requests by the competent intergovernmental machinery and which had originated from the Department itself. The Advisory Committee believes that there should be an accurate costing of the implications of the decisions of intergovernmental bodies as they relate to the programme of work.

IV.15. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 9.39 that the staffing requirements for 1998-1999 of subprogramme 2, Population, include 26 posts in the Professional category and above, as in 1996-1997. Although no abolition of posts is proposed for this subprogramme, one post at the P-5 level is proposed for reclassification to the P-4 level "to reflect enhanced functions in the area of migration". Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the rationale for the downgrading of the post was to realize further economies. The Committee recalls that the Secretary-General had requested this post at the P-5 level in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,[2] in

view of the importance of covering the issues of international migration. Under the circumstances, although the Committee recognizes the Secretary-General's authority to reclassify posts up to the level of P-5, he should have explained his action in the case better. In that connection, the Committee recalls what it has indicated in chapter I, paragraphs 20 and 72.

IV.16. As indicated in table 10.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Department for Development Support and Management Services for the biennium 1998-1999 is 148 (60 Professional and 88 General Service), representing a decrease of 10 regular budget posts (1 Professional and 9 General Service), as compared with the total of 158 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 10.3, the total of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 57 posts (43 Professional and 14 General Service), representing a decrease of one Professional. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Department had 12 vacant posts (4 Professional and 8 General Service).

IV.17 The Advisory Committee was provided with a revised organizational chart proposed for 1998-1999. The Committee notes from the chart and paragraph 10.25 that a P-5 post is proposed for redeployment from the Vienna Reconstruction Unit to the Office at Geneva (from subprogramme 2, Environment and social development management, to subprogramme 1, Public administration, finance and development). The Committee recalls that this P-5 post was transferred, in the context of the 1996-1997 programme budget, from the Office at Geneva to the Vienna Unit so that economies could be realized.[3] The Committee notes that the Department has requested separate provisions of $2,300,600 for an Executive Office (one P-5, one P-4/3 and seven General Service) under programme support. The Committee trusts that, as noted above in paragraph IV.2, savings will be realized in administration and programme support with the merging of the executive office functions of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services.

IV.18. It appears to the Committee that in a number of cases posts are proposed for abolition solely because they are vacant. As discussed in chapter I, the Committee believes that it is necessary to come to some clear understanding of the criteria that should apply for the abolition of posts. In the view of the Committee, the functions of the vacant posts proposed for abolition may well be of a continuing nature and necessary to deliver mandated programmes of the United Nations in the economic and social areas.

IV.19. The Advisory Committee was not provided with evidence that the publication programmes of the three Departments had been fully reviewed and endorsed by the competent intergovernmental bodies. In that connection, the Committee recalls what it stated in paragraph VII.8 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997[4] and paragraph 113 of chapter I. In the opinion of the Committee, it has also not been demonstrated that all publications of the three Departments fulfil a clear identifiable need, that they do not duplicate other publications inside and outside the United Nations and that they are produced in a cost-effective manner, also taking into account feedback from the readership. The Advisory Committee recommends that the intergovernmental machinery of the new merged department encompassing units of the three former Departments become more actively involved in an in-depth review of its publications programme. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee requests the Secretary-General to explore the use of new methods and technologies for the production and dissemination of publications in a more

economical manner (i.e. further use of CD-ROMs and the Internet as preferred media for dissemination of economic and social statistics).

IV.20. The Committee requests a better division of labour between UNCTAD and the Headquarters departments dealing with economic and development issues in studies concerning such fields as trade, investment and development (see sect. 11A, para. 11A.31). The Committee was unable to obtain, for example, a clear explanation as to how such collaboration was achieved on such annual publications as the World Economic and Social Survey. From the current budget submission, there is little evidence that an evaluation has been made to ascertain whether or not there is duplication of published materials emanating from the various units within the United Nations and, based on readership, what publications should continue to be issued on an annual basis and what others on a different basis. The Committee notes that, subsequent to its discussions with representatives of the Secretary-General on the subject, in paragraph 142 (b) of his report of 14 July 1997 (A/51/950), the Secretary-General indicates that the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD will undertake a review of their activities in the macroeconomic area in order to strengthen their cooperation and rationalize and enhance United Nations work in this area.

Section 8. Africa: New Agenda for Development

IV.21. Under section 8 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $5,087,000 (before recosting) for 1998-1999 for the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as compared with $4,365,800 appropriated for 1996-1997, or a 16.5 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $2,890,900 for 1998-1999, as compared with estimates of $1,915,500 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 50.9 per cent (table 8.1). The implementation of programme activities under this section will be under the joint responsibility of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, ECA and the Department of Public Information.

IV.22. Posts requirements under section 8 for 1998-1999 (table 8.3) include 19 regular budget posts (12 Professional and 7 General Service), reflecting an additional post at the P-4/3 level. Temporary posts to be financed from extrabudgetary resources are projected at seven posts (four Professional, two General Service and one Local level), showing a reduction of one P-4/3 post.

Section 11A. Trade and development

IV.23. As indicated in paragraphs 11A.1-11A.3, at its ninth session, held at Midrand, South Africa, in April 1996, UNCTAD adopted far-reaching reforms that included a streamlined intergovernmental machinery, improved working methods, a reduced number of meetings and a restructuring of the secretariat. The Conference decided that the UNCTAD programme of work should concentrate on four areas: globalization and development; investment, enterprise development and technology; international trade in goods and services and commodities issues; and services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency. The Conference also decided that programme issues of least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, the empowerment of women and cooperation among developing countries should be treated as cross-cutting issues and be integrated into every aspect of the UNCTAD work programme (para. 11A.3).

IV.24. In addition to the quadrennial conference, UNCTAD's streamlined intergovernmental machinery consists of the Trade and Development Board and three subsidiary bodies, the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues and the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development (para. 11A.4). Previously, the Trade and Development Board's subsidiary machinery had included nine bodies.[5] Each of the commission of the Trade and Development Board may convene expert meetings of not more than three days' duration, with the total number of meetings not exceeding 10 per annum (para. 11A.5).

IV.25. Resources for 1998-1999 are estimated at $107,470,900 (before recosting) for UNCTAD. The provision reflects a resource decrease of $2,755,400 or 2.4 per cent from the 1996-1997 appropriations. Projected extrabudgetary resources for 1998-1999 amount to $44,088,100 as compared with $39,508,300 for 1996-1997.

IV.26. As indicated in table 11A.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for UNCTAD for the biennium 1998-1999 is 394 (227 Professional and 167 General Service), representing a decrease of 53 regular budget posts (31 Professional and 22 General Service), as compared with the total of 447 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 11A.3, the total of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 32 (13 Professional and 19 General Service), representing an increase of 3 General Service extrabudgetary posts.

IV.27. The proposed post reduction includes 11 posts to be transferred to the regional commissions' budgets for 1998-1999, as follows: three posts to ESCAP (one P-5, one P-3 and one Local level), three to ECLAC (one P-5, one P-4 and one Local level), three to ECA (one P-5, one P-4 and one Local level) and two to ESCWA (one P-5 and one Local level). These 11 posts were already allocated to the UNCTAD/regional commissions joint units in 1996-1997 and their activities were implemented from the headquarters of the various regional commissions. The Committee trusts that this development will not adversely affect the interaction between UNCTAD and the regional commissions in substantive activities of common interest. The UNCTAD staffing proposal for 1998-1999 also includes the reclassification of one D-2 post to the Assistant Secretary-General level and the conversion of a regular budget temporary D-2-level post to established status. Accordingly, the actual number of posts proposed for abolition is 43 posts (25 Professional and 18 General Service). Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, UNCTAD had 64 vacant posts (41 Professional and 23 General Service).

IV.28. The Advisory Committee recalls that in section III, paragraph 26, of its resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995, the General Assembly approved the establishment of a P-4 post for the follow-up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and requested the Secretary-General to fill the position on a priority basis. In that regard, upon request, the Committee was informed that the position had not yet been filled on a permanent basis. The Committee regrets this and trusts that urgent action will be taken.

IV.29. The Advisory Committee notes from table 11A.2 that, after the far-reaching reforms encompassing "a streamlined intergovernmental machinery, improved working methods, a reduced number of meetings and restructuring of the secretariat of UNCTAD" (para. 11A.2), there is a proposal for a reduction of 2.4 per cent in UNCTAD's resource requirement for 1998-1999. The Committee

notes that there is a 4.9 per cent reduction in the provision for posts but provisions for other staff costs (i.e. general temporary assistance and overtime) increase by 14 per cent, for consultants by 7.2 per cent and for furniture and equipment by 44 per cent. Reductions proposed for travel and contractual services in the regular budget are largely offset by substantial increases in those categories of expenditure under extrabudgetary resources.

IV.30. Provisions for consultants and ad hoc expert groups amount to $2,677,900 under the regular budget and $22,010,000 under extrabudgetary resources. Under the regular budget, these include $13,600 for external evaluation of the management and programme implementation (para. 11A.22), $637,700 for globalization and development (para. 11A.31), $1,092,600 for investment enterprise development and technology (para. 11A.42), $421,900 for international trade in goods and services and commodities (para. 11A.54), $245,100 for services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency (para. 11A.63), and $255,600 for issues related to least developed, landlocked and island developing countries (para. 11A.71). The Advisory Committee sought clarification as to how many of the consultants would also serve as members of the ad hoc expert groups, since, as indicated in paragraph 11A.31, a consultant will assist in the preparation of the ad hoc expert group on economic cooperation among developing countries. The Committee was provided with a detailed breakdown of the programme of work of the consultants and of the ad hoc expert groups under each subprogramme.

IV.31. The Committee notes that the increased provisions for consultants ($513,600) and for ad hoc expert groups ($124,100) are required "to ensure that the full programme of work can be fulfilled with the reduced complement of staff that have been requested above" (para. 11A.31). From the information provided, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the estimates for consultants and ad hoc expert groups appear to be more than what will be required to cover the cost of specialized consultancy expertise not available in the secretariat for the preparation of mandated studies and reports. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that a large number of studies are included in the UNCTAD work programme on the initiative of the Secretariat. Furthermore, the Committee points out that in paragraph 11A.54 (a) $275,900 is requested to prepare, inter alia, "country-specific studies on the dynamic effects of the Uruguay Round agreements on development", with no details concerning the number of such studies. In the Committee's opinion, related estimates, in various instances, would cover the cost of supplementary staff services in addition to those already available. The Committee is, therefore, of the view that there is a need to identify more clearly the work to be carried out by consultants, ad hoc expert groups and the staff of the UNCTAD secretariat.

IV.32. In table 11A.7 and paragraph 11A.18, post requirements of the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD reflect an increase of an additional post at the Assistant Secretary-General level. In paragraph 11A.7 it is explained that a D-2 post is proposed for reclassification to the Assistant Secretary-General level in view of the increased responsibility that the demands of strategic planning and management of the new structure place on the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference. It is also proposed to convert another D-2 post from a temporary to an established basis in subprogramme 2, Investment, enterprise development and technology (see table 11A.14). The Committee has no objection to these requests for the reasons given by the Secretary-General.

IV.33. With reference to the UNCTAD publication programme, the Advisory Committee recalls its observations in paragraphs IV.34 to IV.36 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.[4] The

Committee had indicated that, in addition to the parliamentary documentation, there was a proliferation of publications issued by UNCTAD, including a number of recurrent and non-recurrent publications and published material, such as newsletters, bulletins, handbooks, fact sheets and pamphlets. The Committee reiterated its concern regarding the potential for duplication of activities, especially as regards published material, between UNCTAD and other entities within the United Nations. The Committee also noted that there was no evidence of a comprehensive evaluation of the UNCTAD publications programme so as to ascertain whether or not all publications currently being issued should be continued (see chap. I, paras. 113 and 114).

IV.34. In that connection, the Advisory Committee was informed by representatives of UNCTAD that a detailed review of its publications had been made in 1996. From the report United Nations publications: cost-effectiveness in implementing legislative mandates prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/51/946, para. 55), the Committee also notes that a complete list of publications proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 has already been made available to Member States for their review. The Committee notes, however, that the report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its twenty-seventh session[6] provides no evidence that such a review was undertaken by the Working Party.

IV.35. As indicated in paragraphs 11A.12 and 11A.39 (a) (i), the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery also includes the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which provides overall direction to UNCTAD's related programme of work. The Commission, composed of 53 members, meets biennially and reports to the Economic and Social Council. The Advisory Committee notes that the reports to be submitted to the Commission at its fourth session, in 1999, are to be decided by the Commission at its third session, in 1997. In the Committee's opinion, this renders questionable the basis for formulating the estimates for the relevant non-recurrent publications listed in paragraph 11A.39 (b) (ii).

IV.36. In paragraphs 11A.29 (b) (iii), 11A.39 (b) (iii), 11A.52 (b) (iv) and 11A.61 (b) (iii), a large number of technical projects are described relating to computer software packages and materials that UNCTAD will furnish to member States. The Advisory Committee was informed that the related estimates covered would be under extrabudgetary resources and that the computer software and materials were geared primarily for use by developing countries. They include booklets, technical notes, user guides, glossaries and administrators' manuals; interactive teaching materials; computerized statistical databases; and reproduction and dissemination of information in electronic format, such as CD-ROMs and through the Internet. The Committee was informed that the software packages required regular maintenance and upgrading and that, in view of the precarious extrabudgetary resource situation, UNCTAD was considering the possibility of charging a small fee to users to allow for continuing support by the UNCTAD secretariat. The Committee recognizes the importance of those services to the developing countries. In view of the resource situation, the Committee encourages UNCTAD to pursue this course of action without delay to ensure that there is no interruption of services, in particular to the least developed countries. The Committee is of the view that, with respect to those countries, UNCTAD should be flexible in charging user fees. In that connection, the Committee recalls that it had recommended that the Secretary-General explore fully the possibility of generating revenues from the sale of on-line United Nations database information services, as well as from the production and sale of recurrent publications.[7]

Section 11B. International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

IV.37. As indicated in paragraph 11B.7 the administrative and financial arrangements for the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT (ITC) were agreed upon between the secretariats of the United Nations and the former General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1974 and reported upon to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1533 and A/C.5/1604). Under these arrangements, ITC is a subsidiary organ of both the United Nations (acting through the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) and GATT. Since 1995, GATT responsibilities have been taken over by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

IV.38. The Advisory Committee was provided with the exchange of letters, dated 29 September 1995 between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of WTO on the relations between these two organizations. It was agreed that the arrangements and practices described in document A/AC.179/5 of 9 March 1976 in respect of the United Nations/GATT relationship provide a suitable basis to continue to guide relations between the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. With respect to ITC, it was agreed to recommend to the responsible intergovernmental organs that present arrangements governing the status of ITC as a joint body be confirmed and renewed with WTO subject to revised budgetary arrangements as called for by the General Council of WTO.

IV.39. As indicated in paragraph 11B.8, on 3 April 1995, the WTO General Council decided that the ITC budget would be subject to the same preparation and reporting procedures as the WTO budget itself. Accordingly, the ITC budget would cover a calendar year and would be presented in Swiss francs. Furthermore, the budget would be formulated by the ITC secretariat using exchange rates and inflation factors to be decided upon jointly between the ITC and the WTO secretariats in consultation with the United Nations.

IV.40. As indicated in paragraph 11B.9, ITC proposes to start, with the biennium 1998-1999, the new budgetary procedures endorsed by the WTO General Council prior to the concurrence of the General Assembly. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, in May 1997, an outline of the ITC budget was presented orally to the WTO Finance and Budget Committee and that, in October 1997, the ITC budget will be submitted to that Committee, which will then report to the WTO General Council. The proposals to the Assembly on the level of the appropriation to finance the United Nations share of the ITC annual budgets would continue to be based on relevant Assembly resolutions and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations. The ITC annual budget proposals for 1998 and 1999 will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-second and fifty-third sessions, respectively.

IV.41. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that the arrangements entered into by the Secretary-General with the Director-General of WTO, in the exchange of correspondence of September 1995, have not yet been submitted to the General Assembly. The Committee is of the view that the agreement between the secretariats of the United Nations and the former GATT in 1974 is still in force until the Assembly reviews the agreement between the United Nations and WTO.

IV.42. The Advisory Committee considers it essential that both the General Assembly and the WTO General Council have the views of the Committee before acting on the budget proposals of ITC. The Committee recommends that financial and budgetary arrangements of ITC include provisions for the ITC secretariat to submit its full budget proposal to the Committee for consideration at its spring session in the year preceding the start of the relevant budgetary period, and not in October.

IV.43. As regards the proposed estimates for the biennium 1998-1999, the Advisory Committee notes that, at this stage, the Secretary-General is requesting a provisional maintenance budget of $22,326,600 (before recosting). The level of the proposed appropriation for financing the United Nations share of the ITC budget has been set at its 1996-1997 cost-sharing level. No details were provided to the Committee on the breakdown of this contribution. The Committee therefore cannot take a position on the United Nations share at this time. The Committee will revert to this matter upon receipt of proposals to revise existing procedures for ITC and the ITC budget which would be prepared in accordance with agreed procedures.

Section 12. Environment

IV.44. Under section 12 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $8,582,500 (before recosting) for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for 1998-1999, as compared to $8,231,100 for 1996-1997, or a 4.2 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $235,908,900 for 1998-1999, as compared to $224,609,800 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 5 per cent (see table 12.1).

IV.45. The Advisory Committee points out that the UNEP extrabudgetary resource projection for 1998-1999 may not be attainable. As indicated in paragraph 12.6, the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 19/22 of 7 February 1997, approved an appropriation of $75 million for Fund programme activities (against a proposal of $80 million), or 17 per cent lower than the budget originally approved for the biennium 1996-1997 ($90 million). As shown in table 12.1, the actual resources for Fund programme activities for 1996-1997 amounted to $68,499,300, or a drop of 24 per cent from the original estimate of $90 million. By the same decision, the Governing Council approved a management and administrative support costs budget of $27.5 million for 1998-1999 (against a proposal of $32.7 million). In addition, an extraordinary appropriation of $1 million was approved by the Governing Council, comprising $500,000 for studies requested by the Governing Council for activities directly related to the implementation of improved management and administrative practices by UNEP, and $500,000 for the costs associated with the anticipated special session of the Governing Council in the event that these costs are not covered by the regular budget of the United Nations. The Committee notes from paragraph 126 that UNEP will be reporting to the Governing Council on the implementation of decision 19/22 in the latter part of 1997.

IV.46. As indicated in table 12.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for UNEP for the biennium 1998-1999 is 39 (22 in the Professional category and above, 6 General Service and 11 Local level), representing a decrease of 4 regular budget posts (1 Professional and 3 Local level), as compared with the total of 43 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 12.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts is 600 (296 in the Professional category and above, 98 General Service and 206 Local level), representing a decrease of 191 extrabudgetary posts (71 Professional, 37 General Service and 83 Local level), as compared with the total of 791 extrabudgetary posts for the 1996-1997 biennium. In addition, the Committee was informed that one gratis personnel (Junior Professional Officer) assists the UNEP Regional Office for North America. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, UNEP had 9 vacant posts against the regular budget (one P-5, six P-4, one P-3 and one Local level). Proposed posts for abolition are one P-5 and three Local level posts (see para. 12.7).

IV.47. The Advisory Committee notes the marked reduction in extrabudgetary posts proposed for 1998-1999 in conjunction with the foreseen sharp drop in contributions to the Environment Fund. Nevertheless, the Committee is of the view that the UNEP staffing table still remains top-heavy as compared to other programmes of the United Nations system, with 17 D-2 and 26 D-1 posts (see table 12.3), of which 3 D-2 and 1 D-1 are financed from the regular budget. The Advisory Committee notes that this issue has been discussed at length in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/51/810, paras. 39-42). Further, it notes that the UNEP Governing Council, in its decision 19/29 B of 4 April 1997, requested the Committee of Permanent Representatives (i.e. "representatives of all States Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies and the European Community, accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme, whether based in Nairobi or outside" (UNEP Governing Council decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997)), taking into account the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of UNEP and the administrative practices of its secretariat, including the United Nations Office at Nairobi, to make an assessment of the functioning of the secretariat of UNEP and to make specific recommendations to the Council at its twentieth session as to how to make the secretariat more efficient, effective and transparent.

IV.48. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that UNEP faces a marked decline in resources accompanied by serious shortcomings in its management and administration. These have been extensively discussed in the report of the Board of Auditors on the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme for the biennium ended 31 December 1995[8] and in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/51/810). The Committee notes that the Secretary-General concurred with the recommendations contained in section VIII of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The Committee intends to follow up on the matters discussed in paragraphs IV.45 to IV.47 above, in the context of its examination of the revised estimates for the management and administration support costs budget of UNEP for 1998-1999.

IV.49. UNEP regional representation is addressed in paragraphs 12.18 to 12.21. The Regional Offices for North America in New York and the Regional Office for Europe at Geneva are funded in part from the regular budget (see para. 12.18). Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the New York Office covers annually about 200 meetings, with very limited staff. The work was carried out with the assistance of loaned personnel and a Junior Professional Officer. The Committee notes that the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 19/31 of 7 February 1997, requested the Executive Director to strengthen the regional offices of UNEP by providing them with appropriate functional and administrative capabilities to enable decentralized implementation of regional environmental programmes and priorities, as developed by regional and subregional ministerial meetings. The Committee cautions against UNEP spreading itself too thinly in the process of decentralization of operations (see also A/51/810, paras. 35-38). Unless the financial situation of UNEP improves, the administration and other expenditure required for the decentralized structure might adversely affect the capacity of UNEP to deliver its mandated programmes.

IV.50. Table 12.12 shows the sources of extrabudgetary resources projected for 1998-1999 by specific trust fund. The Advisory Committee notes from the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on the work of its nineteenth session[9] that the Council undertook an extensive review of the management issues and cost of administering UNEP trust funds. The Executive Director had reported to the Council on an interim analysis of the cost to UNEP of administering trust funds and, in particular, whether that cost is covered by 13 per cent administrative

support charged levied on trust funds. The Executive Director's interim analysis concluded that several factors point to the likelihood that the real cost of administering trust fund programmes might actually be higher than can be stated using the current methodology.[10] It was proposed to maintain the current arrangements while keeping them under review. The Committee notes that, in its decision 19/24 B of 7 February 1997 on management issues and the cost of administering trust funds, the Council requested the Executive Director to fulfil decision 18/44 in a more comprehensive manner by identifying the full administrative and management costs incurred by the individual trust funds and UNEP. The Committee is of the view that systematic reviews such as those undertaken by the Governing Council of UNEP can serve as an example for other intergovernmental governing bodies in their reviews of activities funded by trust funds.

IV.51. In its decision 19/32, the Governing Council created a 36-member inter-sessional High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials in Charge of Environment, which will meet at Nairobi annually and assume some of the duties and responsibilities of the Governing Council. In the same decision, the Governing Council also formalized the establishment of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which will hold four regular meetings a year, and decided that an appropriate budget would be allocated by the Governing Council for the two subsidiary organs. The financial implications of the decision would not be borne by the Environment Fund and should be within the financial provisions currently available for meetings of the Governing Council.

IV.52. As indicated in paragraph 12.84 (m), during 1998-1999, under subprogramme 5, Global and regional servicing and support, the activities of UNEPNET/Mercure global communications system will continue. The Mercure satellite communications project has been the subject of detailed comments by the Advisory Committee[11] and the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/51/810, paras. 130-133). The Committee has also requested the Board of Auditors to conduct a special audit on the Mercure project. The Committee notes that in section II, paragraph 7, of its decision 19/22 of 7 February 1997 the Governing Council authorized the redeployment of telecommunications and electronic services and the Mercure system from the management and administrative support costs budget into the Fund programme activities budget, resulting in the abolition of 11 management and administrative support costs posts (5 Professional and 6 General Service); the redeployment of the Resource Mobilization Unit from the management and administrative support costs budget into the Fund programme activities budget, resulting in the abolition of 7 posts (3 Professional and 4 General Service). The Committee reiterates its view on this matter that, taking into account the nature of services to be provided through the Mercure system, the costs for the implementation, management and maintenance of the system should be covered and presented under the management and administrative support costs budget of UNEP[12]. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Executive Director include the costs of the Mercure system and the Resource Mobilization Unit in the revised management and administrative support costs budget for 1998-1999 to be submitted to the Governing Council through the Committee in the latter part of 1997.

Section 13. Human settlements

IV.53. Under section 13 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $11,795,600 (before recosting) for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for 1998-1999, as compared to $11,731,700 for 1996-1997, or a 0.5 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary

resources are projected at $80,950,900 for 1998-1999 as compared to $78,922,300 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 2.6 per cent (see table 13.1).

IV.54. As in the case of UNEP, the Advisory Committee is concerned with the continuous resource decline faced by Habitat and its serious administrative and financial management shortcomings. The Committee has commented on these matters in some detail.[13] These issues have also been reviewed and discussed extensively in the report of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium ended 31 December 1995[14] and by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report on the review of the programme and administrative practices of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (A/51/884). The Committee notes from the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the work of its sixteenth session that, in its decision 16/29 of 7 May 1997, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to take any necessary action to provide Habitat with the capacity to improve its financial and administrative management.

IV.55. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that in paragraph 20 of its resolution 51/177 of 16 December 1996 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commission on Human Settlements, to ensure more effective functioning of the Centre by, inter alia, providing sufficient human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations. The Committee notes that in its resolution 16/8 of 7 May 1997, the Commission provided the Secretary-General with guiding principles to take into account, in undertaking the comprehensive and in-depth assessment requested by the Assembly in its resolution 51/177, and requested the Executive Director of the Centre to report to the Commission at its seventeenth session, to be held in 1999, on the implementation of resolution 16/8.

IV.56. As indicated in table 13.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for Habitat for the biennium 1998-1999 is 66 (42 in the Professional category and above, 2 General Service and 22 Local level), representing a decrease of 7 regular budget posts (2 Professional and 5 Local level), as compared to the total of 73 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in the table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 151 (70 in the Professional category and above and 81 Local level), representing an increase of 10 extrabudgetary post (2 Professional and 8 Local level), as compared with the total of 141 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, Habitat had 10 vacant posts against the regular budget (1 D-1, 5 P-3, 2 P-2 and 2 Local level). Two P-3 and five Local level posts are proposed for abolition (see para. 13.5).

IV.57. As indicated in paragraph 13.2, the 1998-1999 programme of work reflects significant programmatic changes from that of 1996-1997 as a result of the incorporation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in June 1996. The number of subprogrammes has been reduced from eight to the following four: (a) Shelter and social services, (b) Urban management, (c) Environment and infrastructure and (d) Assessment, monitoring and information.

IV.58. The Advisory Committee notes that in its decision 16/28 of 7 May 1997 on the draft work programme of Habitat for the biennium 1998-1999, the Commission on Human Settlements requested the secretariat of the Centre to prepare, by 15 June 1997, a revised work programme, taking into full account its conclusions and priority setting, plus an additional version organized according to the

structure of the Habitat Agenda, with a clear indication of linkages between paragraphs of the Habitat Agenda and the work programme. The revised draft work programme was to be subjected to review and approval, four weeks after its submission, by the Bureau of the Commission, with the support of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

IV.59. From the information provided to the Advisory Committee, it is not clear the extent to which the Commission on Human Settlements reviewed the programme of work of the Centre in terms of prospects for its full implementation. In this connection, the Committee invites the Commission to review and assess, in the light of the critical financial situation of the Centre and of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation,[15] the Centre's planned programme activities and outputs, in particular the recurrent and non-recurrent publications, with a view to determining which ones need to be dispensed with or postponed.

IV.60. The Advisory Committee recalls that for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, the integration of all the administrative and support functions into one office in Nairobi entailed the transfer of resources from both regular budget and extrabudgetary resources of UNEP, Habitat and the United Nations Common Services, Nairobi, into the newly established United Nations Office at Nairobi. The Office of the United Nations Controller, in consultation with representatives of Habitat and UNEP agreed on proportions for the financing of the common administration.[16] In its report on the proposed budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium 1998-1999,[17] the Committee recommended that the basis for the cost distribution be reviewed. In this connection, the Committee notes that in paragraph 2 (d) of its resolution 16/19 of 7 May 1997 the Commission urged the Executive Director of Habitat to review the Centre's operational relationship with the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Furthermore, the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 19/22 of 7 February 1997, requested the Executive Director of UNEP to report, inter alia, on UNEP interaction with the United Nations Office at Nairobi and whether it is efficient and effective in delivering on the programmes of UNEP.

Section 14. Crime control

IV.61. Under section 14 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $5,411,300 (before recosting) for the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division for 1998-1999, as compared to $5,194,900 for 1996-1997, or a 4.1 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $1,600,000 for 1998-1999 as compared to $1,521,300 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 5.2 per cent (see table 14.1).

IV.62. As indicated in table 14.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Division for the biennium 1998-1999 is 21 (16 in the Professional category and above and 5 General Service). One General Service post is proposed for abolition. No Professional posts are proposed for abolition. As indicated in the table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1998-1999 is 11 Professional posts (including nine associate experts at the P-2/1 level), representing an increase of 1 Professional post. Moreover, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Division is assisted by three type 1 gratis personnel, who provide expert advice and substantive input in general and judicial police activities and in criminal justice administration. The Committee was provided with an organizational chart showing the proposed organizational structure and post distribution for 1998-1999.

IV.63. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Division had four vacant posts against the regular budget (1 P-5, 1 P-3, 1 P-2 and 1 General Service). Proposed changes in the staffing table include the redeployment to the Division of one D-1 and one P-5 posts from the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna in exchange for one P-4 and one P-3 posts. The D-1 post is proposed for the Deputy Director, who will also perform the functions of Secretary of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The P-5 post is proposed for the head of the Section on Operational Activities and Commission's Secretariat Section (see paras. 14.3 and 14.13). From the information provided, the Committee believes that convincing arguments have not yet been stated in support of the redeployment of the D-1 post to this Division.

IV.64. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice holds annual sessions in Vienna for eight working days. In addition, in its resolution 5/3 of 31 May 1996, the Commission requested its bureau to meet during the periods between sessions and to endeavour to hold inter-sessional meetings with the bureau of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs. It also established an Informal Consultative Group on Resource Mobilization (see para. 14.5). The Advisory Committee sought clarification on the number of meetings to be serviced by the Division. The Committee was informed that substantive servicing of intergovernmental/expert bodies included 12 meetings of the General Assembly (Third Committee), 10 of the General Assembly's special sessions on illicit drug production and trafficking, 12 of the Economic and Social Council, 32 of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 24 of the Commission's in-session working group, 12 of the Commission's Bureau, 12 of the Commission's inter-sessional consultations, 8 of the Commission's Informal Consultative Group on Resource Mobilization and 6 of the Commission's Working Group on Resources and Mandates.

IV.65. The Advisory Committee notes that the Division's work programme merely lists the number of meetings to be serviced and the number of reports to be prepared and submitted. In several instances, it is not clear what the output is going to be or by what means the secretariat intends to implement the work programme. For example, in paragraph 14.12 (b) (i), under promotion of legal instruments, these include the United Nations model treaties on extradition, mutual assistance in criminal matters, the transfer of proceedings in criminal matters and the transfer of foreign prisoners and the promotion of the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials.

IV.66. In the view of the Advisory Committee, it appears that the number of reports to be submitted to the Commission will be more than can be handled in 16 meetings. Moreover, the Committee notes that in 1999 the work programme will be particularly heavy owing to additional preparatory work for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to be held in the year 2000. The Committee notes that there is no discussion in the report as to how the normal work programme will be adjusted to accommodate this extra work. The Committee believes that the number of meetings may not be adequately serviced and that the Commission may not have the capacity to receive and consider all the reports.

IV.67. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a detailed description of the proposed programme of work for the Division for the biennium 1998-1999.[18] The Committee notes the discussion held by the Commission on the work programme and its decisions taken on strategic management and programme questions (see chapter IX of the report of the Commission on its sixth session[19] and resolution 6/1 of 9 May 1997). The Committee notes from paragraph 147 of

the Commission's report that it expressed concern over the continuing disparity between the number and breadth of the mandates and the resources available to meet them. It was pointed out in paragraph 149 of the report that the workload in the work programme, even though it reflected existing mandates, was far too heavy to be carried out within the resources provided.

IV.68. The Advisory Committee regrets, however, that no firm solution to this dichotomy was agreed upon. Some suggested approaches to the issue are outlined in paragraph 12 of the Commission's report, such as deletion of certain items from the proposed programme of work and funding of other items not through the regular budget but only with extrabudgetary funds, and the use of savings arising from streamlined parliamentary reporting to reinforce the operational capacity of the programme.

IV.69. In its resolution 6/1 on strategic management, the Commission reiterated its decision to curtail and streamline its reporting requirements and urged the Secretary-General to use his discretion in determining the necessity, form and length of such reporting. The Chairman of the Commission was requested to convene an informal working group of the members of the Commission to undertake, in consultation with its Bureau, a review of the programme mandates and resources with a view to establishing a more realistic relationship between them and that the review should focus on the expectations of Member States for the implementation of existing mandates, the requirements for meeting those expectations and the extent to which regular budget resources are to be used to support operational activities. The working group will consider the issue of maximizing the existing resource potential of the programme and of streamlining the agenda of the Commission. It is worth noting also that in section II of resolution 6/1, on resource mobilization, the Commission requested the Secretary-general to issue a consolidated appeal on crime prevention and criminal justice requirements to Governments.

Section 15. International drug control

IV.70. Under section 15 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $16,203,300 (before recosting) for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for 1998-1999, as compared to $16,195,000 for 1996-1997. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $162,298,000 for 1998-1999, as compared to $141,235,100 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 14.9 per cent (see table 15.1).

IV.71. As indicated in table 15.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Programme for the biennium 1998-1999 is 68 (44 in the Professional category and above and 24 General Service), representing a decrease of 5 regular budget posts (1 Professional and 4 General Service), as compared with the total of 73 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in the table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the 1998-1999 biennium is 237 (95 in the Professional category and above and 142 General Service), representing a decrease of 20 extrabudgetary Professional posts, as compared to 257 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee was provided with an organizational chart showing the proposed organizational structure and post distribution for 1998-1999 and was informed that the Programme has been assisted by 20 associate experts at the P-2/1 level (not shown in the table). Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Programme had 9 vacant posts (6 Professional and 3 General Service) under the regular budget.

IV.72. The General Assembly, in its resolution 45/179 of 21 December 1990, established the Programme as the body responsible for concerted international action in the field of drug abuse control. Programme activities are financed from the regular budget of the United Nations and by voluntary contributions for the Fund of the Programme. For the biennium 1994-1995, less than 10 per cent of Programme resources came from the regular budget of the United Nations and about 90.3 per cent from voluntary contributions for the Fund of the Programme[20]. The Fund was established by the General Assembly in section XVI of its resolution 46/185 C of 20 December 1991, as from 1 January 1992, under the direct responsibility of the Executive Director of the Programme for financing operational activities mainly in developing countries.

IV.73. The regular budget resources of the Programme are allocated mainly for servicing the intergovernmental bodies and the International Narcotics Control Board (an independent technical body, established by the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs). As regards voluntary contributions for the Fund, in section XVI, paragraph 2, of its resolution 46/185 C the General Assembly authorized the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to approve, on the basis of the proposals of the Executive Director of the Programme, both the budget of the programme of the Fund and the administrative and programme support costs budget, other than the expenditures borne by the regular budget of the United Nations. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee considers the reports of the Executive Director on the biennial budget estimates of the Fund and submits recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The next budget of the Fund will be considered by the Advisory Committee in the fall of 1997.

IV.74. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs holds regular annual sessions and a biennial resumed session devoted to administrative and budgetary matters. The Advisory Committee welcomes the coordination mechanism established between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice mentioned in paragraph IV.64 above.

IV.75. With regard to the programme of work of the Programme, the Advisory Committee notes that, for 1998-1999, it has been restructured from eight to three subprogramme. The Committee notes, however, that there is no evidence from the reports of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs submitted to the 1997 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council[21] and of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1996[22] that the programme of work has been reviewed by these two bodies.

IV.76. Taking into account the fact that the Advisory Committee makes separate recommendations to the governing body of the Fund in respect of its biennial budget proposals (see para. IV.73 above), the Committee recommends that the presentation of section 15 of the regular budget be reviewed with a view to streamlining its content and explaining more precisely how the inputs from the regular budget are used to support the activities funded from the Fund. In the opinion of the Committee, the current narratives clutter the presentation of the proposals, with lengthy descriptions of activities which are not funded from the resources of the regular budget.

Notes

[1] See E/1997/27, E/1997/26 and E/CN.5/1997/11, chap. III.

[2] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), para. 8.66.

[3] Ibid., para. 9.54.

[4] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1).

[5] Ibid., Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), para. 10A.4.

[6] TD/B/43/2-TD/BWP/96.

[7] See, for example, Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1), para. VII.17.

[8] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 5F (A/51/5/Add.6).

[9] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25).

[10] UNEP/GC.19/18, para. 13.

[11] See UNEP/GC.19/L.1, annex, paras. 17-21.

[12] Ibid., para. 20.

[13] See, for example, HS/C/16/12/Add.1 and HS/C/15/8/Add.1.

[14] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 5H (A/51/5/Add.8).

[15] See HS/C/16/12/Add.1, paras. 11 and 12.

[16] See HS/C/15/8, paras. 32 and 33.

[17] HS/C/16/12/Add.1.

[18] E/CN.15/1997/20.

[19] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 10 and corrigendum (E/1997/30-E/CN.15/1997/21 and Corr.1).

[20] See E/CN.7/1997/8, para. 8.

[21] E/1997/48.

[22] E/1997/56.

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

PART V. REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

V.1. The Secretary-General's estimate for part V of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 amounts to $399,362,600, comprising a total of $90,771,600 for sections 16A, Economic and social development in Africa, and section 16B, Regional Commissions New York Office; $73,408,100 for section 17, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific; $49,310,800 for section 18, Economic development in Europe; $90,245,500 for section 19, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean; $49,704,800 for section 20, Economic and social development in Western Asia; and $45,921,800 for section 21, Regular programme of technical cooperation.

V.2. During its consideration of the budget proposals for the regional commissions, the Advisory Committee observed that a number of elements are common in all of the budget submissions.

V.3. The budget submissions for the regional commissions should have indicated activities and services that were initially envisaged for the biennium 1996-1997 but were postponed to 1998-1999 in order to meet the budget reductions (see chap. I, para. 12).

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* The present document contains part V of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7

(A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

V.4. The Advisory Committee points out the lack of uniformity in the presentation of programmes of activities of the regional commissions. While the budget submissions for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) include a number of substantive activities under programme support, the submissions for the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) list under programme support only traditional support functions such as administrative, conference and library services and common support services. The Committee recommends that the format of presentation of programmes of activities of the regional commissions should be reviewed with a view to delineating more clearly substantive activities vis-à-vis programme support and harmonizing the budget presentation.

V.5. Moreover, the Advisory Committee points out that the methodology for arriving at the estimated percentage distribution of total resources within a budget section between the programme of work and programme support needs to be further refined. The Committee notes that the level of resources proposed for programme support in some regional commissions continues to be high in relation to resources requested for the programme of work. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its view contained in paragraph V.7 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997[1] that the requirements for programme support should have been considerably lower and that the resources thus released could have been diverted to substantive activities.

V.6. The budget submissions for the regional commissions should indicate more clearly the extent of review by intergovernmental organs of the programmes of work of the commissions and their various organizational and institutional issues, including intergovernmental structures. The results of such reviews should be summarized, preferably in a table, indicating the main changes in the number of intergovernmental bodies and changes in conference-servicing requirements, including the number and duration of meetings. The budget submissions should identify the financial implications resulting from intergovernmental reviews, as well as proposed re-allocation within the same budget section of released resources to other priority issues. Furthermore, all increases in requirements resulting from intergovernmental reviews should also be indicated in the budget submissions.

V.7. In the course of its consideration of part V of the proposed programme budget, the Advisory Committee was informed that a number of publications proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 were initiated by the secretariats of the commissions. The Committee recommends that future budget submissions identify publications initiated by the secretariats, including studies to be undertaken by consultants. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that future budget submissions indicate more clearly intended users of United Nations publications, both recurrent and non-recurrent. The Committee also reiterates its view reflected in paragraph 76 of its first report on the proposed budget for the biennium 1996-1997[1] that the Secretariat should indicate to the relevant intergovernmental bodies the number, type, cost and audience of each

publication, the date intended for publication, the date when each publication was first requested, who requested such publication, when it was last reviewed and by whom.

V.8. The Advisory Committee notes the trend for significantly increasing resources for consultants and experts in the regional commissions: ECA - 47.7 per cent, ECLAC - 44.5 per cent, ECE - 12.7 per cent, ESCWA - 16.8 per cent and ESCAP - 8.1 per cent. In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its comments and observations in paragraph 83 of chapter I and points out also that requirements for consultants in future budget submissions should be prepared in accordance with such guidelines which the General Assembly may wish to establish as a result of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive policy guidelines on consultants to be submitted in accordance with section VI, paragraph 4, of Assembly resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997.

V.9. In connection with the proposed redeployment of posts and non-staff resources from UNCTAD to the regional commissions, the Advisory Committee points out that the budget submissions should have identified all resources proposed for redeployment between budget sections. The Committee recommends that the next budget submissions indicate, explain and justify all proposed redeployments of posts and non-staff resources between budget sections.

V.10. The description of activities and services of the regional commissions should be presented more clearly to permit a quantitative and qualitative monitoring of programme implementation. The activities to be performed by the regional commissions include coordination, cooperation and liaison, although in most instances it is not possible to ascertain by what means and at what cost they will be accomplished. The Advisory Committee recommends that the description of international cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison be significantly improved so that Member States are provided with a clear picture of how these activities relate and contribute to other quantifiable and/or identifiable mandated activities.

V.11. The Advisory Committee notes that proposed estimates for travel in the budget submissions for ESCAP, ECE and ECLAC show various rates of growth (13.5 per cent for ESCAP, 3.9 per cent for ECE and 0.4 per cent for ECLAC). The Committee recalls, in this connection, its earlier observation that with the advent of technological innovations and the on-line availability of information, expenditures in this area could, in some cases, be considerably lowered.[2] The Committee reiterates its position on this matter and requests that additional measures be taken to reduce travel costs in ESCAP, ECE and ECLAC in future budgets.

V.12. The budget submissions do not currently allow for objective analysis of the ratio of General Service support posts to Professional posts, since some staff occupying General Service posts perform functions other than clerical. The budget submissions should also have contained information on gratis personnel. The Advisory Committee recalls the provision of General Assembly resolution 51/243 by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to phase out expeditiously type II gratis personnel, as well as Action 3 of the Secretary-General's measures and proposals for reform contained in his report on

renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform (A/51/950) in which it is stated that a plan will be developed to phase out the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat at the earliest possible date. The Committee recommends that information on all types of personnel should be readily available in the context of the its review of a proposed programme budget.

Section 16A. Economic and social development in Africa

V.13. As shown in table 16A.1 of the proposed programme budget, the regular budget estimate for section 16A for 1998-1999 amounts to $89,552,300, showing an increase of $1,568,300 over the 1996-1997 appropriations. The extrabudgetary resources of ECA for the biennium 1998-1999 are estimated at $15,840,600, which reflects a decrease of $536,100 compared with 1996-1997 estimates.

V.14. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 16A.7 that the growth of 1.9 per cent in proposed regular budget resources represents the combined effect of the delayed impact of the posts established in 1996-1997 (2 P-3 and 3 Local level posts), the application of new standardized vacancy rates, the redeployment from UNCTAD of two Professional and one Local level posts, increases and decreases under various non-post objects of expenditure and the proposed abolition of 15 Professional and 40 Local level posts. The Committee was informed that 44 Professional and 36 Local level posts were vacant in ECA as at 30 April 1997.

V.15. As indicated in table 16A.3 the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 62, compared with 60 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. The net increase of two extrabudgetary posts reflects an increase of three Local level posts under programme support which is partly offset by a decrease of one Professional (P-5) post under programme of work.

V.16. As can be seen from the table in paragraph 16A.7, the Secretary-General estimates that of the total resources proposed under section 16A, 55.8 per cent of regular budget resources and 80.8 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be spent on activities relating to the programme of work, while 40.6 per cent of regular budget resources and 16.3 per cent of extrabudgetary resources would be required for programme support. The Advisory Committee notes that resources for some substantive activities are currently shown under programme support (for example, activities indicated in paragraphs 16A.91 (a) and (b)), while some resources for administrative support are included under programme of work (for example, each subregional development centre has one Professional staff at the P-2 level dealing with administrative support and their costs are included under programme of work). In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its recommendation in paragraph V.4 above.

V.17. As indicated in paragraph 16A.5 of the budget submission for ECA, the number of substantive divisions has been reduced to five and 55 posts are proposed for abolition as a result of the streamlining of the programme of work and the restructuring of the secretariat. Part of the resulting savings will be used to increase resources in four areas: (a) consultants, (b) ad hoc expert group meetings, (c) data-processing equipment and (d) general operating expenses.

V.18. The Advisory Committee points out, in this connection, that it finds the distinction between substantive and non-substantive divisions of ECA to be somewhat blurred. As can be seen from paragraph 16A.91 of the budget submission, the three divisions which fall under the category "programme support" also perform a number of substantive functions, such as substantive servicing of meetings, preparation of parliamentary documentation and international cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison. The Committee requests, therefore, that a management review of functions currently assigned to all divisions of ECA be undertaken by the Executive-Secretary with the view to establishing clear and transparent lines of responsibility between the divisions dealing with substantive and programme support functions.

V.19. As indicated in paragraph 16A.5 of the proposed programme budget, the increased allocation of resources to consultants, ad hoc expert group meetings, data-processing equipment and general operating expenses will give ECA greater flexibility in programme implementation. According to the Secretary-General, the use of consultants and experts would also provide ECA staff the opportunity to train so as to eventually be able to carry out many of these functions themselves. The Advisory Committee points out, in this connection, that in order to ensure an effective transfer of knowledge and expertise from short-term consultants and experts to ECA staff, deliberate management action to promote training needs to be taken by the ECA administration, since mere interaction with experts is unlikely, in the view of the Committee, to result in a tangible increase in staff knowledge.

V.20. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 16A.5 (d) that the increase in resources for general operating expenses will be used primarily to strengthen the multinational programming and operational centres (MULPOCs), which have been renamed subregional development centres. Moreover, as stated in paragraph 16A.25, a particularly important measure aimed at enhancing the impact of the work of the Commission is decentralization of staff and activities to the subregional level. About 25 percent of all ECA staff will be deployed to the five subregional development centres.

V.21. The Advisory Committee welcomes the attention of the administration of the Commission to the needs of the subregional development centres and requests that effective steps be taken to ensure that qualified staff are assigned to the centres and that operating facilities, including enhanced communications and computing capacity, are provided.

V.22. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 16A.6 that the programme of work of ECA for the biennium 1998-1999 reflects a further consolidation, which resulted in a reduction of the current nine subprogrammes to that of five priority areas of activity. As indicated in paragraph 16A.22, the Commission's programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 is derived from the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001[3] and is based on the new programme structure approved as part of the reforms launched since mid-1995.

V.23. Information on the structure of policy-making organs of ECA and on the pattern of their meetings is contained in paragraphs 16A.8 to 16A.10. During its deliberations, however, the Advisory Committee was informed that as a result of the restructuring of the intergovernmental organs of ECA, the following

subsidiary bodies were proposed for abolition: (a) the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Development; (b) the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Sustainable Development and Environment; (c) the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration; (d) the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications (in 1999); (e) the Conference of African Ministers of Industry (in 2001); (f) the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa; (g) the African Regional Conference on Science and Technology; and (h) the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Demographers and Information Specialists. A new structure of intergovernmental bodies of ECA, as proposed by the Conference of African Ministers at its thirty-second session, held in May 1997, is as follows:

Legislative organs dealing with overall development issues

1. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning (the Commission) and its Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (biennial)

2. Follow-up Committee of the Commission (biennial - inter-sessional years)

3. Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the five subregional development centres (annual)

Conferences of Ministers

1. Conference of African Ministers of Finance, and its Committee of Experts (biennial)

2. Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications (biennial) - to be abolished in 1999

3. Conference of African Ministers of Industry (biennial) - to be abolished in 2001

Subsidiary bodies

1. Committee on Women and Development (biennial)

2. Committee on Development Information (biennial)

3. Committee on Sustainable Development (biennial)

4. Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (biennial)

5. Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development (biennial)

6. Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology (biennial)

7. Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration (biennial)

V.24. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the new intergovernmental structure of ECA had been approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/5 of 18 July 1997. The necessary revisions will be reflected in the final document of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

V.25. The Advisory Committee welcomes and commends the efforts of the Commission to streamline its structure and to set up new modalities for programme delivery. In this connection, the Committee notes that there will be fewer reports and a reduction in the number and frequency of meetings, as reflected in paragraph 16A.25. The table below, which is based on information provided to the Committee, illustrates some of the reductions:

	1996-1997 (1)	1998-1999 (2)	(2) to (1) (percentage)
Intergovernmental reports	109	44	40.4
Recurrent publications	49	33	67.3
Non-recurrent publications	119	82	68.9

V.26. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that a significant number of both recurrent and non-recurrent publications are initiated by the ECA secretariat and are later presented to the intergovernmental machinery, often in the context of the work programme; moreover, a large number of publications will be based on studies to be prepared by outside consultants and experts (examples of such publications are indicated in paragraphs 16A.51 (b) (ii) and 16A.54). In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its recommendation in paragraph V.7 above on the need to identify publications and studies to be undertaken by consultants.

V.27. The Advisory Committee also notes from paragraph 16A.25 that to enhance the quality of its documents, ECA will improve content by more vigorous technical editing and peer review and that such activities will be complemented by periodic surveys to measure client satisfaction. While welcoming this intention, the Committee points out that this should have resulted in reductions in resource requirements for printing, translation, reproduction and editing. However, more resources are being requested for these activities. The Committee also draws attention to its recommendation in paragraph V.7 above on the need to clearly identify intended users of United Nations publications.

V.28. The Advisory Committee notes the proposed abolition of two P-3 translator posts. At the same time, the Committee notes from paragraphs 16A.38 and 16A.82 that a total amount of $225,400 is proposed under contractual services for outside translation and editing. The Committee was not provided with a convincing justification for the proposed abolition of the two posts and therefore questions this proposal.

V.29. A provision of $36,700 is requested for the training of two translators (see para. 16A.97). The Advisory Committee recalls, in this connection, that

the Commission had initiated in the biennium 1992-1993 a revival of a training programme for translators/precis-writers in accordance with the requirements of section II of resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990.[4] Considerable resources have been spent on the programme since the biennium 1992-1993. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that 26 out of 53 participants in the training programme had successfully passed the final exams since the inception of the programme in 1978-1979.

V.30. Almost half ($413,200) of the total estimated requirements under contractual services ($954,400) of ECA relates to salaries of full-time and part-time language teachers. The Committee was informed, on request, that the language programme is implemented by three full-time language teachers (1 in Arabic, 1 in English and 1 in French) and eight part-time instructors (1 in Arabic, 4 in English and 3 in French). Full-time teachers are paid on a monthly basis and part-time teachers are paid on an hourly basis at the hourly rate of $30/hour effective 1 September 1994.

V.31. As can be seen from table 16A.2, the largest resource growth for ECA is proposed under general operating expenses ($1,390,900). The Committee notes from paragraph 16A.98 that the bulk of the growth ($1,055,000) is mainly attributable to the operation of the new conference facilities, in particular maintenance requirements for electrical, mechanical and air-conditioning systems and interpretation equipment.

V.32. With regard to extrabudgetary resources, the Advisory Committee recalls that it had recommended in the past that causes for a decline in extrabudgetary resources received by all of the regional commissions be identified and examined.[5] The Committee was informed, in this connection, that a sharp decrease in 1998-1999 estimates under the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development is due, in fact, to a change in accounting of the two largest bilateral voluntary contributions, which during the current biennium were recorded under the Fund; such contributions are reflected for the biennium 1998-1999 under bilateral sources and not under the Fund (see table 16A.1).

V.33. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon request, that an estimated extrabudgetary provision of $3,106,800 reflected under services in support of extrabudgetary activities of table 16A.1 includes: (a) an amount of $1,978,600 relating to the ECA Clinic Fund, which represents an increase of $375,300; and (b) an amount of $1,128,200 for programme support, representing an increase of $120,700, commensurate with the level of extrabudgetary resources expected to be raised. With regard to the ECA clinic, the Committee was informed that since December 1994, the services of the clinic were no longer provided free of charge to staff members, who in turn had started claiming reimbursement from their respective medical insurance schemes. ECA staff, as well as that of other participating United Nations agencies, are provided various medical services, including surgery, dentistry, cardiology, paediatrics, ophthalmology, psychiatry, neurology, radiology, etc. Participating agencies are charged a per capita contribution, which is based on the projected total clinic budget less income from services rendered to staff members. Upon the Committee's request, the secretariat clarified that the reason for the increased cost estimates for the clinic for 1998-1999 was that with the increased income expected to be realized from charges to staff, the clinic was planning to expand its services

by hiring additional consulting doctors, purchasing medical equipment (a one-time expense) and acquiring medical supplies.

Section 16B. Regional Commissions New York Office

V.34. The Advisory Committee was informed that there was no particular significance in attaching section 16B, Regional Commissions New York Office, of the proposed programme budget to section 16A. Paragraphs 16B.1 and 16B.2 provide a description of the activities of the Regional Commissions New York Office. With the exception of small reductions under general temporary assistance ($600), overtime ($1,300) and travel of staff ($4,500), the resources requirements for the Office are proposed at the maintenance level and provide for three posts in the Professional category and above and three General Service posts. The Committee has commented further on liaison offices in Chapter I, paragraph 116.

Section 17. Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific

V.35. The Secretary-General's estimate for section 17 for the biennium 1998-1999, as reflected in table 17.1, amounts to $73,408,100 under the regular budget and $31,353,800 in extrabudgetary resources. The proposed requirements under the regular budget show a growth of $424,600 (or 0.6 per cent) over the revised 1996-1997 appropriations. As can be seen from tables 17.1 and 17.2 the growth is all attributable to the programme of work and to increased requirements, mainly under other staff costs ($367,900) and travel ($151,900).

V.36. As reflected in table 17.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 468, representing a net decrease of 47 regular budget posts as compared with the total of 515 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. This decrease reflects the abolition of 50 posts (of which 24 posts are to be abolished effective 1 January 1999 and not at the start of the biennium), which is somewhat offset by the redeployment to ESCAP of 3 posts from UNCTAD. The Advisory Committee points out that table 17.3 should have contained a footnote indicating the effective date of the abolition of these 24 posts. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed budget includes resources for salaries and common staff costs for the 24 posts for the period from 1 January to 31 December 1998. The Committee was also informed that there were 69 vacancies in ESCAP as of 30 April 1997.

V.37. In the course of its deliberations, the Advisory Committee was informed that there are currently 25 gratis personnel (type I) in ESCAP. The Committee inquired into what appears to be a relatively high ratio of General Service posts to Professional posts and was informed that a large number of General Service staff do not perform clerical functions. In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its recommendation in paragraph V.12 above that detailed information on all types of personnel should be readily available in the context of the Committee's review of a proposed programme budget.

V.38. With regard to the redeployment to this section of three posts and non-post resources from UNCTAD for the UNCTAD/ESCAP Joint Unit on Transnational Corporations, the Advisory Committee draws attention to its recommendation in paragraph V.9 above on the need to indicate, explain and justify all proposed redeployments of posts and non-staff resources between budget sections.

V.39. As indicated in table 17.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 70, a decrease of 8 extrabudgetary posts as compared with the total of 78 posts for the biennium 1996-1997.

V.40. The Committee was informed that the proposed programme of work was approved by the Commission at its fifty-third session, held from 23 to 30 April 1997 at Bangkok. At that session, the Commission also endorsed the recommendations of an intergovernmental meeting held in February 1997 which reviewed the conference structure of the Commission including its thematic priorities and subsidiary structure. The Commission decided to maintain a subsidiary structure of five committees, with minor reordering of programme areas. These include the Committee on Regional Economic Cooperation; the Committee on Socio-Economic Measures to Alleviate Poverty in Rural and Urban Areas; the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Development; the Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development; and the Committee on Statistics. The Commission decided to further streamline its conference structure by reducing the duration of all committee meetings from five to three days. The Committee on Regional Economic Cooperation and the Committee on Statistics will meet biennially. The Commission also decided to retain the special bodies for least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, which would continue to meet biennially for a maximum of two days immediately prior to the annual session of the Commission. The number of ad hoc intergovernmental meetings will be reduced from the current maximum of 15 meetings per year to 5, with the maximum number of meeting days reduced to 25 from the current 100.

V.41. Moreover, the Advisory Committee was informed that the ESCAP secretariat is in the process of preparing its recommendations concerning a revised programme structure, which would form the basis of a secretariat structure, and will report thereon to members of the Commission by the end of October 1997 through the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives, which meets monthly in Bangkok. ESCAP will endeavour to ensure that the secretariat structure is congruent with the programme structure. The recommendations of the Executive Secretary will be submitted to the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, in April 1998.

V.42. The Advisory Committee points out, in this connection, that the programme of work of ESCAP and the structure of its secretariat, as reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, may change. The related programme budget implications should be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration. In the meantime, the Committee notes from paragraph 17.6 that the programme structure of ESCAP has been revised from 6 subprogrammes in the current biennium to 10 subprogrammes in the biennium 1998-1999, following the structure of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.[3] The Committee points out that the titles of four subprogrammes (2, 4, 5 and 6) out of six subprogrammes of the current biennium have been retained without any changes for

the next biennium, while current subprogrammes 1, Regional economic cooperation, and 3, Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development, were each subdivided into three subprogrammes to make six new subprogrammes.

V.43. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon request, that the changes in the number of subprogrammes reflect a more sectoral approach to ensure that accountability and responsibility for the delivery of a programme, and for achieving the results intended, are clearly identified. The Committee recalls, in this connection, its observation in paragraph V.3 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,[1] whereby, in the context of its review of the thematic approach to programme implementation, the Committee stressed the need to improve considerably the role of programme managers and their respective organizational units in programme implementation. The Committee welcomes the change towards a more sectoral approach, although, in the view of the Committee, the number of subprogrammes and organizational units of ESCAP needs to be streamlined.

V.44. Although the amount of resources for programme support is proposed to be decreased by $595,500 (see table 17.1), the Advisory Committee is concerned about what appears to be a relatively high share (51.2 per cent) of programme support in the overall regular budget resources of the Commission for 1998-1999. The Committee points out that the high ratio is due in part to the fact that the estimated cost of some substantive activities of ESCAP (see para. 17.102) is included under programme support. In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its recommendation in paragraph V.4 above on the need to review the format of presentation of programmes of activities of the regional commissions with a view to delineating more clearly substantive activities vis-à-vis programme support.

V.45. The Advisory Committee recalls its observation in paragraph V.29 of its report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997[1] that the number of ESCAP publications is excessive, and notes, in this connection, the intention of the Commission to reduce during the biennium 1998-1999 the frequency of issuance of many recurrent publications (see para. 17.7). The Committee was informed, upon request, that the Commission's proposed programme of work for 1998-1999 provides for 193 publications (41 issuances), compared with 292 publications (45 issuances) for the current biennium. The proposed programme budget reflects a few savings associated with the reductions in ESCAP publications: $37,200 for editing of documentation (para. 17.14) and $3,700 for printing of publications (para. 17.38). The Committee welcomes the intention to reduce the number of publications, although, as can be seen, the reductions are not significant. The Committee was informed that the Commission had requested its Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives to review the publications programme of ESCAP and report to the Commission thereon in 1998.

V.46. The Advisory Committee also notes from paragraph 17.7 of the proposed programme budget that the exchange and dissemination of information will increasingly be effected by ESCAP through electronic means rather than conventional publications in hard copy. The Committee was provided with information on this issue which indicated that the Commission intended to disseminate electronically during the next biennium 12 issuances pertaining to 7 subprogrammes (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) out of 10. The Committee welcomes the

intention to increase electronic dissemination of information. The Committee was provided with additional information which indicated that the number of page-units of internal reproduction of ESCAP publications for 1998-1999 would amount to 2,522,400, compared with 2,702,500 during the biennium 1994-1995. The Committee trusts that the next budget submission of ESCAP will reflect savings and other benefits resulting from electronic dissemination of information.

V.47. The Advisory Committee also notes from the report entitled "UN 21 - Accelerating managerial reform for results" (A/51/873) that two efficiency projects of ESCAP deal with electronic transfer of information; however, the report does not contain an indication of any savings to be achieved as a result of the implementation of the projects.

V.48. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 17.13 of the proposed programme budget that an increase of $85,300 is requested for the travel of conference-servicing staff from Geneva to service the Commission sessions and other meetings held under the auspices of ESCAP. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that since one English and one Russian translator post are being abolished, the increase is to cover the cost of travel of English and Russian translators from Geneva to Bangkok. The Committee points out, in this connection, that among the efficiency projects undertaken by ESCAP and referred to in document A/51/873, is a project on limited use of remote translation in the Language Services Section. The Committee welcomes the project and encourages the secretariat of ESCAP to expand the use of remote translation.

Section 18. Economic development in Europe

V.49. As indicated in table 18.1 of the proposed programme budget, the regular budget resources proposed for ECE amount to $49,310,800 and extrabudgetary resources are estimated at $10,165,500. The proposed regular budget resources reflect a growth of $2,269,100, or 4.7 per cent. As explained in paragraph 18.16, the growth represents mainly the combined effect of the application of new standardized vacancy rates, the transfer to this section of the ECE share of the payments to the International Computing Centre for the operation and maintenance of the mainframe and the proposed abolition of 16 posts (4 in the Professional category and above and 12 General Service).

V.50. As indicated in table 18.3, the proposed staffing table provides for a total of 195 regular budget posts (114 in the Professional category and above and 81 General Service), reflecting a decrease of 16 posts compared with the biennium 1996-1997, and a total of 9 extrabudgetary posts (7 Professional posts and 9 General Service posts), reflecting a decrease of 5 posts compared with the biennium 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee was informed that there were 27 vacancies in ECE as of 30 April 1997 (16 Professional posts and 11 General Service posts). The secretariat of ECE has currently one gratis expert (type I) dealing with energy matters.

V.51. As indicated in paragraphs 18.5 to 18.15, the Commission has undertaken an in-depth review of its programme of work and intergovernmental structure. A result of this review has been a streamlining and rationalization of the programme of work and a reduction in the corresponding intergovernmental

machinery (from 14 to 7 principal subsidiary bodies). In addition, all principal subsidiary bodies are requested to reduce the length of their meetings, to rank their activities in order of priority and to define precise programmes of work for any new related bodies, with a time-frame and sunset clauses. The seven principal subsidiary bodies are also requested to review their own subsidiary bodies with a view to limiting them to two categories: working parties of a standing nature and ad hoc groups of experts which are established for a two-year period with a precise programme of work. This may result in further streamlining and reduction of meetings not reflected in the proposed programme budget.

V.52. The Advisory Committee sought clarification in respect of the number of meetings of ECE intergovernmental bodies reflected in paragraph 18.20 of the proposed programme budget. According to the clarification received, the Committee on Environmental Policy meets three days annually (12 meetings in the biennium); in addition there will be a special session in March 1998 dealing with the preparation for the Ministerial Conference of June 1998 and another in 1999 dealing with environmental performance reviews. Thus, the total number of meetings is 24, as indicated, but not detailed, in paragraph 18.35.

V.53. The reform of ECE envisages two mechanisms that will introduce more flexibility in the Commission's methods of work. The first provides for the establishment of a Group of Experts on the Programme of Work which will meet every two years prior to the preparation of the programme budget submission to provide recommendations to the Commission on adjustments and shifts in the ECE programme of work. The second involves the establishment in the secretariat of ECE of a Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities, the role of which will be to deal with issues and activities that, within the ECE mandate, respond to the needs of only specific groups of countries. As indicated in paragraph 18.23, it is proposed to include activities of the Unit under executive direction and management because they do not relate to one specific subprogramme. The Unit will coordinate or organize seminars and workshops in all sectors, but particularly in areas no longer covered by intergovernmental bodies (see para. 18.10).

V.54. The Advisory Committee recommends that the responsibilities and functions of the Unit, as outlined in the proposed programme budget, should be defined more clearly and steps should be taken to ensure that the activities of the Unit do not duplicate those of other organizational units of ECE.

V.55. The activities of the Commission in 1998-1999 are, as indicated in paragraph 18.11, in conformity with the overall objectives of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.[3] However, the reform process has led to a strengthening, reorganizing, streamlining or reduction of activities under various subprogrammes. These programmatic changes will be reflected in the revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 to be submitted in 1998.

V.56. As can be seen from paragraphs 18.12 to 18.15, five subprogrammes (1, 2, 3, 4 and 7) have been strengthened, activities related to the subprogramme on economic analysis have been reorganized, three subprogrammes (6, 9 and 10) have

been streamlined and refocused on a limited number of priority issues, and the subprogramme on industry and technology has been discontinued.

V.57. As can be seen from table 18.2, a growth of $215,100 in regular budget requirements is reflected under contractual services, of which an amount of $189,300 represents mainly a transfer of resources from general operating expenses, as explained in paragraphs 18.132 and 18.133. The balance of $25,800 relates to external production of various publications of ECE. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon inquiry, that the number of recurrent publications of ECE will be reduced for the biennium 1998-1999 from the current level of 101 to 80. In this connection, the Committee requests that ECE reduce the need for external production of its publications by using to the maximum extent possible internal reproduction facilities.

Section 19. Economic and Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

V.58. The estimate for section 18 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 amounts to $90,245,500 in regular budget requirements and $15,920,100 in extrabudgetary resources. The proposal under the regular budget reflects a resource growth of $134,100, or 0.1 per cent, over the 1996-1997 appropriations. This growth represents the combined effect of the application of the new standardized vacancy rates, the delayed impact of the P-4 post established in the biennium 1996-1997, the redeployment to this section of 3 posts from UNCTAD and the proposed abolition of 44 posts. The level of extrabudgetary funding for the next biennium shows a decrease of $2,672,100, or 14.4 per cent, compared with the estimates for the current biennium.

V.59. As indicated in table 19.3, the proposed staffing table provides for a total of 491 regular budget posts (178 in the Professional category and above and 313 General Service), reflecting a net decrease of 41 posts compared with the biennium 1996-1997, and a total of 56 extrabudgetary posts (38 Professional and 18 General Service), reflecting a decrease of 6 posts compared with the biennium 1996-1997. It also provides for reclassification of two P-2 posts to the P-3 level in the Division of Administration. The proposed staffing table also reflects the redeployment to ECLAC of three posts from UNCTAD. A number of internal redeployments are also proposed between various offices of the Commission; the redeployments are due in part to a decrease in the number of subprogrammes. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the proposed staffing structure of ECLAC.

V.60. The Advisory Committee was informed that there were 71 vacancies in ECLAC as of 30 April 1997 (35 Professional posts and 36 General Service posts). The secretariat of ECLAC also currently has four gratis personnel (type I) and four interns.

V.61. As indicated in the overview to section 19, the Commission, by its resolution 553 (XXI) decided to establish an ad hoc working group to define priorities of the work programme and recommend to the Commission strategic directions for its future activities. The first meeting of the ad hoc working group took place at ECLAC headquarters from 29 to 31 July 1996 to examine

the precise content of the work programme for 1998-1999 and its priorities. The second meeting of the ad hoc working group took place in New York on 5 June 1997. The Advisory Committee was informed by representatives of ECLAC that the ad hoc working group recommended that the activities of the Commission be classified as follows in terms of their relative priorities: 10 per cent - high priority; 75 per cent - medium priority; 10 per cent - low priority; and 5 per cent - lowest priority.

V.62. The table below illustrates the intergovernmental structure of ECLAC and frequency of meetings of its policy-making organs:

	Proposed 1996-1997	Actual 1996-1997	Proposed 1998-1999
Sessions of the Commission	1	1	1
Committee of the Whole	1	1	1
Committee of High-level Governmental Experts	2	0	2
Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee	2	2	2
Urban Housing Committee	1	1	0
Committee on Central American Economic Cooperation	1	1	2
Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean	1	1	0
Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women	4	2	3
Presiding officers of the Regional Council for Planning, Latin American and the Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning	0	1	1
Total	13	10	12

V.63. The Committee of the Whole of ECLAC will continue to meet in New York, as in the past, and the Commission rotates the venue of its meetings among the member States of ECLAC. The Advisory Committee was informed that it was less expensive for the Commission to rent space for a few days of meeting rather than to build conference facilities of its own.

V.64. At its second meeting, the ad hoc working group considered an outline of a new pilot management project to decentralize authority in certain areas of human resources and budget management. The Advisory Committee notes from

paragraph 4 of resolution 563 (PLEN.21) of 6 June 1996 of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC that it supported the general thrust of the project "which will be developed and described in detail, in order to be submitted for consideration and approval by member countries of the Commission before its implementation". The Committee on Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session took note of the pilot project.

V.65. In the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for ECLAC for the biennium 1998-1999, the Advisory Committee also reviewed a note by the secretariat in the document on the pilot management scheme.[6] The Committee welcomes the efforts by the Secretary-General to give programme supervisors greater authority and flexibility to mobilize the human and financial resources at their disposal so that functions may be carried out in the most efficient and effective manner, and in return to require a stricter accounting in terms of the content, volume and quality of outputs as well as overall performance. However, many provisions and ideas reflected in the document, require, in the view of the Committee, further clarification and explanation. For example, with regard to financial management initiatives, it is not clear as to what the parameters of increased flexibility in budgetary expenditures might be and what new authorities in budget implementation are being sought as compared with the existing ones. The idea of negotiating with donors appropriate levels of overhead charges on extrabudgetary contributions and introducing more customer-oriented audit and accounting procedures also opens a number of important questions which need to be answered, including what guidelines need to be in place to ensure that officials of the regional commissions are protected against pressure which may result in the Organization receiving inadequate compensation for its support to activities funded from extrabudgetary resources. It is also important to define precisely what is meant by customer-oriented audit and accounting procedures. Moreover, the project document does not specify which of the financial rules of the United Nations need to be revised and to what extent. With regard to the initiatives on human resources management, the project document does not indicate clearly the role and responsibilities of the Office of Human Resources Management vis-à-vis the secretariat of ECLAC, nor does it indicate whether the initiatives in human resources management were subject to discussions with staff representatives.

V.66. The Advisory Committee understands that, as provided for in paragraph 4 of resolution 563 (PLEN.21), the pilot project will be developed and described in detail for consideration and approval by member countries of the Commission before its implementation. Further, the Committee expects that the secretariat of the Commission will coordinate the development of the project with all parties affected by it, including the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Office of Human Resources Management.

V.67. The work programme as approved by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session includes 11 subprogrammes, compared with 14 subprogrammes in the current biennium.

V.68. The table below provides information on the current subprogramme structure and the proposed structure for the biennium 1998-1999:

1996-1997 subprogramme	1998-1999 subprogramme	Comments
1. Food and agriculture	-	Activities and resources on food and agriculture are redeployed to subprogramme 3, Productive, technological and entrepreneurial development.
2. Economic development	4. Macroeconomic equilibria, investment and financing	
3. Economic and social planning	6. Administrative management	
4. Industrial, scientific and technological development	3. Productive, technological and entrepreneurial development	This subprogramme also includes activities and resources redeployed from the 1996-1997 subprogramme on food and agriculture.
5. International trade and development finance	1. Linkages with the global economy, competitiveness and production specialization	
6. Natural resources and energy		Activities and resources on natural resources and energy are redeployed to subprogramme 7, Environmental and land resource sustainability.
7. Environment and human settlements	7. Environment and land resource sustainability	This subprogramme includes also activities and resources redeployed from the 1996-1997 subprogramme, Natural resources and energy.
8. Population	8. Population and development	
9. Social development	5. Social development and social equity	
10. Statistics and economic projections	9. Statistics and economic projections	

1996-1997 subprogramme	1998-1999 subprogramme	Comments
11. Transport		Activities and resources on transport are redeployed to subprogramme 2, Integration, open regionalism and regional cooperation.
12. Subregional activities in Mexico and Central America	10. Subregional activities in Mexico and Central America	
13. Subregional activities in the Caribbean	11. Subregional activities in the Caribbean	
14. Regional integration and cooperation	2. Integration, open regionalism and regional cooperation	This subprogramme includes also activities and resources redeployed from the 1996-1997 subprogramme on transport.

V.69. The Advisory Committee was informed that no changes were being proposed in the organizational structure of the secretariat of the Commission for the biennium 1998-1999, although as a result of the changes in the lines of responsibilities for the implementation of the work programme of ECLAC, only 12 organizational units will report to the Executive Secretary of the Commission, compared to the current 19.

V.70. Table 19.2 provides details of the net regular budget resources growth of $134,100, which represents mainly a combined effect of increases under contractual services ($626,500), other staff costs ($584,200), consultants and experts ($314,600) and furniture and equipment ($127,400), largely offset by decreases under posts ($736,300), general operating expenses ($686,300) and supplies and materials ($99,100).

V.71. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon request, that the increase in requirements under other staff costs and consultants and experts is due mainly to a shift from using regular staff on established posts to using temporary personnel on short-term appointments, general temporary assistance, and outside consultants and ad hoc experts. This, in the view of the Commission, will allow greater flexibility to programme managers in implementing the work programme.

V.72. With regard to the increase of $625,100 under contractual services, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 19.135 that it relates mainly to the projected requirements for the publications programme, for data-processing services and the purchase of software and network services and for the provision of high-end photographic and information services. The Committee points, in this connection, to the efficiency projects being implemented in ECLAC which,

according to the report on managerial reform (A/51/873), could result in savings estimated at approximately $1.9 million. The representatives of ECLAC were unable, however, to identify specific savings in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, as compared with 'economies' to be achieved against future expenditure. The Committee is of the view that some of the efficiency projects undertaken by the Commission, including the implementation of more cost-effective technology and practices in document production and distribution, electronic dissemination of documents and publications and increased adoption of electronic technologies to increase efficiency in achieving the goals of the work programme, should considerably contribute to reducing requirements for contractual services, especially in respect of the publications programme.

V.73. The Advisory Committee notes that the publications programme of ECLAC is quite extensive and that the bulk of it consists of non-recurrent publications (over 200). The proposed programme budget does not provide information on the number of publications initiated by the secretariat at its own discretion. Furthermore, consultants are also engaged in producing specific case studies which contribute to additional publications arising from their work. In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its comments and recommendations in paragraph V.7 above. Moreover, the Committee is of the view that the number of publications of ECLAC appears excessive and should be reviewed.

V.74. With regard to the proposed activities such as coordination, cooperation and liaison, the Advisory Committee draws attention to its comments and recommendations in paragraph V.10 above and points also to the need to design a method by which the cost and means of implementing these activities could be presented in the estimates in a clear and concise manner.

Section 20. Economic and social development in Western Asia

V.75. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 under this section amounts to $49,704,800 under the regular budget and to $374,300 in extrabudgetary resources. The proposal under the regular budget reflects a resource growth of $538,000, or 1.5 per cent, over the 1996-1997 appropriations. This growth results mainly from the combined effect of (a) the redeployment to this section of the resources previously allocated to the UNCTAD/ESCWA Joint Unit on Transnational Corporations (1 P-5 and 1 Local level post and non-post resources); (b) the reclassification of 1 P-4 post to the P-5 level; (c) the application of new standardized vacancy rates; and (d) the proposed abolition of 3 posts in the Professional category and above (1 D-1, 1 P-4 and 1 P-2) and 26 Local level posts. The proposed amount of $49,704,800 under the regular budget also includes an estimated amount of $15,023,500 for recosting, the bulk of which ($14,255,800) is due to the difference in the standard salary and common staff costs between 1996-1997 Amman rates and 1998-1999 Beirut rates.

V.76. The level of estimated extrabudgetary funding for the biennium 1998-1999 shows a significant decrease of $2,147,200, or 85.1 per cent, compared with the estimates for the current biennium. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon inquiry, that no posts are proposed for extrabudgetary funding during the biennium 1998-1999. A clarification was provided in respect of an

extrabudgetary P-5 post reflected in table 20.3 of the fascicle. This post is, in fact, for an individual provided gratis (type I).

V.77. The Committee was informed that the vacancy situation in ESCWA as of 30 June 1997 was as follows: 28 posts in the Professional category and above and 12 Local Level posts and 3 Field Service posts.

V.78. The proposed staffing table of ESCWA for the biennium 1998-1999 provides for 103 posts in the Professional category and above, 160 Local level posts, 3 Field Service posts and 1 gratis personnel post. These numbers reflect the redeployment to ESCWA of two posts from UNCTAD, the abolition of 29 regular budget posts and a reduction of 40 extrabudgetary posts, compared with the biennium 1996-1997. The proposed staffing table reflects also the proposed reclassification of 1 P-4 post to the P-5 level in subprogramme 5, Development, coordination and harmonization of statistics and information, in view of the increased responsibilities of the post, which include formulation and supervision of the programme of work on national accounts, financial and price statistics. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the proposed staffing structure of ESCWA.

V.79. The programme of work of ESCWA for the biennium 1998-1999 comprises five subprogrammes and was formulated within a thematic framework of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.[3] The programme of work is also based, as indicated in paragraph 20.5, on the assumption that ESCWA will be operating at its permanent headquarters at Beirut as of September 1997. The Advisory Committee recalls, in this connection, that in paragraph V.41 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,[1] the Committee had noted the Secretary-General's statement that the cost of moving the ESCWA secretariat from Amman to Beirut would amount to $4.5 million. In the course of its consideration of the budget proposal for ESCWA for the biennium 1998-1999, the Committee was informed, however, that the cost of the move is being estimated now at approximately $5.5 million; efforts are being taken to raise additional voluntary contributions for the move. The Committee was also informed that, should the amount of extrabudgetary resources be insufficient to cover the full cost of the relocation, the shortfall would be met from the regular budget, within existing resources, and reported to the General Assembly in accordance with established budgetary procedures. This would be, in the view of the Secretary-General, in line with paragraph 5 (c) of ECOSOC resolution 1994/43 of 29 July 1994, by which the Secretary-General was requested to ensure that the transfer was financed within existing resources and primarily from extrabudgetary contributions and without prejudice to planned cost savings.

V.80. The Advisory Committee points out that, in its view, a disproportionate share of resources is budgeted for programme support. As can be seen from paragraph 20.8 of the fascicle, 47.3 per cent of regular budget resources would be required for programme support, while the share of the programme of work is 46.3 per cent. The Committee understands that this is due in part to the fact that the cost of such substantive activities as information services and management of technical cooperation is currently budgeted under programme support. In this connection, the Committee draws attention to its recommendation in paragraph V.4 above on the need to review the format of

presentation of programmes of activities of the regional commissions with a view to delineating more clearly substantive activities vis-à-vis programme support.

V.81. The structure of the intergovernmental machinery of ESCWA is indicated in paragraph 20.10. The table below indicates the number of meetings to be held by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies during 1998-1999:

ESCWA meetings	Days of meetings 1998	Days of meetings 1999	Total number of meetings
Commission (twentieth ministerial session)	-	2	4
Technical Committee (eleventh session)	-	3	6
Committee on Energy (second session)	-	2	4
Committee on Water Resources (second and third sessions)	2	2	8
Committee on Social Development (second session)	-	3	6
Statistical Committee (third session)	-	3	6
Committee on Transport (first session)	-	3	6
Technical Committee on liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization in the countries of the ESCWA region (first and second sessions)	3	3	12
Arab conference on follow-up to global conferences	-	3	6
Intergovernmental meeting on transport facilitation across borders through harmonization of norms, standards and related conventions	4	-	8
Total	9	24	66

Section 21. Regular programme of technical cooperation

V.82. The regular programme of technical cooperation complements, as indicated in paragraph 21.2 of the proposed programme budget, assistance available to developing countries under other programmes. The programme is divided into sectoral advisory services (implemented by 8 United Nations offices) and regional and subregional advisory services (implemented by 5 regional commissions). The three main types of technical cooperation activities are short-term advisory services, field projects and training.

V.83. The proposed budget for the biennium 1998-1999 under this section is estimated at $45,921,800, which reflects a resource growth of $6,644,000, or 17.7 per cent, over the 1996-1997 appropriations. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 21.12 and 21.13 that the resource growth reflects an attempt to partially ameliorate the unsatisfactory situation resulting from the budgetary reductions in the amount of $7,438,800 applied to the initial 1996-1997 appropriation of $44,814,700. The breakdown of the proposed budget requirements by sectoral advisory services and regional and subregional advisory services is provided in tables 21.2 and 21.3.

V.84. The Advisory Committee transmits the estimates under section 21 to the General Assembly for appropriate action.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1).

[2] Ibid., para. V.8.

[3] Ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6 and corrigendum (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1).

[4] Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/46/7), para. 23.17.

[5] Ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1), para. V.10.

[6] LC/G.1964.

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

PART VI. HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

VI.1. The Secretary-General's estimate for 1998-1999 for part VI, Human rights and humanitarian affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 amounts to $138,646,400, comprising $46,448,500 for section 22, Human rights; $50,568,700 for section 23, Protection of and assistance to refugees; $19,375,000 for section 24, Palestine refugees; and $22,254,200 for section 25, Humanitarian assistance.

Section 22. Human rights

VI.2. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 22.3 that the proposed programme budget for section 22 was prepared following a restructuring of the programme on human rights and a reorganization of the Centre for Human Rights. The Advisory Committee also notes that the programme will be implemented through a new management structure put in place in 1996. However, it is not clear to the Committee whether claims of greater efficiency can be substantiated, and it is also difficult to compare the estimates unit-by-unit with the 1996-1997 programme budget owing to the changes in the structure of the Secretariat. In this connection, the Committee recalls that the General Assembly, when adopting the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001,[1] decided in its resolution 51/219

* The present document contains part VI of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

of 18 December 1996 to adopt programme 19, Human rights, without prejudice to consideration by the General Assembly of the ongoing process of restructuring the Centre for Human Rights.

VI.3. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on steps being taken to implement recommendations contained in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services of 26 April 1995 (A/49/892).

VI.4. The Advisory Committee notes from table 22.2 that for 1998-1999 the amount of $46,448,500 is proposed under the regular budget. This represents a decrease of $1,552,100 as compared to appropriations of $48,000,600 for 1996-1997. As indicated in the same table, for 1998-1999, the amount of $48,879,400 is expected under extrabudgetary resources. This represents an increase of $4,005,400 as compared to estimates of $44,874,000 for 1996-1997.

VI.5. With regard to extrabudgetary resources, it is the view of the Advisory Committee that steps should be taken to ensure that trust funds are audited more extensively, especially the large ones. It is the opinion of the Committee that there is also a need to streamline reporting to donors.

VI.6. As indicated in table 22.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 143, representing a decrease of 16 regular budget posts as compared with the total of 159 posts (142 established and 17 temporary) for the biennium 1996-1997. The total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 52, representing a decrease of 4 posts as compared with the total of 48 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee was informed that all of the 16 regular budget posts proposed to be decreased were vacant as of 1 May 1997. The Committee notes that the Secretary-General has proposed converting 14 temporary posts to established posts and making a reduction of 16 posts (11 Professional and 5 General Service), including 3 temporary posts (1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service). However, the reasons for the reduction have not been explained; it is therefore not clear whether the reduction is only for the reason that the posts are vacant or whether the reduction can be justified substantively. The Committee was also informed that the classification and job descriptions of all posts would be completed by the end of July 1997. The Committee welcomes the low ratio of Professional to General Service staff.

VI.7. The Advisory Committee was informed that the number of established posts for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been increased from 13 for 1996-1997 to 15 for 1998-1999 (1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 Assistant Secretary-General, 4 P-5, 1 P-4 and 8 General Service). The Committee also notes that the increase is due to the expansion of the functions under executive direction and management. However, in the opinion of the Committee, care should be taken not to compromise the ability of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide leadership. The Committee recommends that steps be taken to avoid duplication of functions carried out in the field.

VI.8. With regard to subprogramme 1, Right to development, research and analysis, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the Secretary-General should have explained more clearly how the provisions of paragraphs 38 and 39 of General Assembly resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995 are being implemented. In this connection, the Committee points out that in the report of the Secretary-General issued in response to paragraphs 38 and 39 of resolution 50/214, it is stated that an addendum to the report would be issued containing

an analysis of resources distribution (A/C.5/50/71, para. 20). That addendum has not been compiled.

VI.9. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, costs related to the activities of the High Commissioner and the Centre in peacekeeping operations need to be clearly identified in each case. It is also the view of the Committee that there is need to clarify the relationship of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Centre to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and other offices of the Secretariat involved in human rights activities so as to define more clearly the lead role of the High Commissioner and the Centre regarding human rights activities related to peacekeeping operations, special measures and human rights offices in the field. The Committee points out that currently there are six field offices: Abkhazia, Georgia; Burundi; Cambodia; Colombia; Rwanda; and the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Committee calls for greater cooperation between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of the High Commissioner in areas of mutual concern.

VI.10. With regard to the New York Liaison Office posts (1 D-1, 2 P-4, 1 P-3 and 3 General Service), the Advisory Committee recommends that, in view of the increasing use of technologies such as e-mail and facsimile transmission and in light of the budgetary constraints, the size of this Office be reviewed. The substantive support that is provided by this Office also should be taken into account (see chap. I, paras. 115 and 116).

VI.11. In connection with meetings and publications, the Advisory Committee points out that the provision of data on outputs related to meetings and publications would have been useful. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that for 1998-1999, the Secretary-General estimated a total of 1,488 meetings of the intergovernmental organs. The Committee points out that the human rights programme has given rise to a complex intergovernmental machinery. It is the view of the Committee that the time has come for the Commission to come up with a more pragmatic meeting programme for the various subcommissions, committees and other groups and that consideration should be given to holding some meetings every other year instead of annually.

VI.12. In connection with the number of reports to be issued in 1998-1999, the Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed programme budget is based on an estimate of 311 human rights reports, 52 for the General Assembly, 50 for both the General Assembly and the Commission, 2 for the Economic and Social Council, 109 for the Commission on Human Rights, 15 for the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and 83 others. It is the view of the Committee that the number of documents involved and the setting of unrealistic deadlines for completion could adversely affect the efficiency of the legislative process. In this connection, the Committee was informed that with regard to reports prepared by Special Rapporteurs, it was impossible to apply guidelines relating to size and number of reports. Nevertheless, the Committee believes that there is need for review in this area, which should be carried out before the submission of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

VI.13. As regards the publication programme of the Centre, the Advisory Committee recalls paragraph VI.10 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,[2] in which the Committee recommended that the Centre re-examine, as a matter of priority, its publications programme for the purpose of ensuring that all publications fulfil an identifiable need and are produced in a cost-effective manner. The Committee notes that this review has not been carried out.

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform: measures and proposals (A/52/303)

The above report was issued subsequent to the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

As shown in table 22.1 of the report, the financial consequences of the Secretary-General's actions and recommendations relating to section 22 would be a reduction of $1,023,900, from $47,162,600 to $46,138,700, and, as shown in table 22.2, there would be a reduction of two General Service posts.

At the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report, a decision still had not been reached on how the Secretary-General's reform proposals would be dealt with in the General Assembly. The Committee will therefore revert to consideration of document A/52/303 in due course.

Section 23. Protection of and assistance to refugees

VI.14. As indicated in paragraph 23.13, in accordance with article 20 of the statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), no expenditure other than administrative expenditure relating to the functioning of the Office of the High Commissioner is borne by the budget of the United Nations and all other activities of the High Commissioner are financed by voluntary contributions. As indicated in table 23.2, the total number of regular posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 220 (89 Professional posts and 131 General Service), representing a decrease of 24 General Service posts from 244 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. Of the 24 General Service posts to be abolished, 16 are vacant. The Advisory Committee was informed that five Professional posts are also vacant.

VI.15. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 23.14 that the funding of UNHCR from the regular budget may be reviewed in the future to determine whether other budgetary arrangements such as a lump sum grant would be administratively more effective. It is the view of the Committee that in future, whatever arrangement is adopted, the regular budget should continue to fund conference servicing of the Executive Committee.

VI.16. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that contributions from the regular budget of the United Nations have decreased in recent years and now account for approximately 2 per cent of UNHCR resources. The regular budget contribution to UNHCR was reduced from $51,561,300 in 1994-1995 to $50,139,100 in 1996-1997 to cover 244 administrative support posts at UNHCR headquarters. The proposed contribution from the regular budget for 1998-1999 is $50,568,700 to cover the costs of 220 administrative support posts ($47,335,600), a provision for general temporary assistance ($2,008,600) and a partial contribution towards the rent and maintenance and other charges for the UNHCR headquarters building.[3]

VI.17. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed during its consideration of the report on the overview of UNHCR activities financed from voluntary funds, 1996-1998,[4] that, in the context of implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/214, UNHCR was requested to make arrangements to save

approximately $1.4 million in its regular budget posts. This was done by UNHCR by implementing a vacancy rate of 10 per cent, or 24 posts, in 1996-1997. The Committee was informed that as the functions of these posts could not be dispensed with, UNHCR funded the cost of the posts from its voluntary contributions. In the past, the Committee has discouraged the transfer of extrabudgetary posts to the regular budget unless the functions relate to activities that should be funded from the regular budget. In this instance, the Committee questions the rationale for transferring regular budget funding to extrabudgetary funding. Furthermore, such transfers appear more questionable now, when UNHCR is in the process of reducing posts, particularly at headquarters, owing to, inter alia, the steady decline of extrabudgetary resources.

Section 24. Palestine refugees

VI.18. The Advisory Committee recalls General Assembly resolution 3331 B (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, in which the General Assembly decided that the expenses for salaries of international staff in the service of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East which would otherwise be a charge on voluntary contributions should with effect from 1 January 1975 be financed by the regular budget of the United Nations for the duration of the Agency's mandate.

VI.19. The Advisory Committee notes from table 24.2 that for 1998-1999 the amount of $19,375,000 is proposed under the regular budget and the amount of $843,900,000 is expected under extrabudgetary resources.

VI.20. As indicated in table 24.3, the total number of regular budget posts for the biennium 1998-1999 is 84, representing a decrease of 8 (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 5 P-3 and 1 General Service) regular budget posts as compared with the total of 92 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 24.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 60, representing a decrease of 19 extrabudgetary posts as compared with the total of 79 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. Of the eight regular budget posts proposed to be abolished, the Advisory Committee was informed that three posts were vacant as of 27 May 1997. The reduction in posts has not been explained in the programme budget, nor has the Committee been given sufficient information to relate the proposal to the requirements of the programme.

VI.21. In connection with extrabudgetary posts, the Advisory Committee recalls that for the biennium 1996-1997 it had recommended that a report be submitted to it on how the separation entitlements of staff who are paid from extrabudgetary resources are determined. The Committee points out that this report has not yet been submitted.

Section 25. Humanitarian assistance

VI.22. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 25.8 of the proposed programme budget that the distribution of the proposed resources reflects the reorganization of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs carried out on the basis of the findings of the management review undertaken in 1996. The Committee also notes that as a result of the reorganization four additional posts at the P-5 level are proposed to be established under the regular budget, to be offset by the abolition of four General Service posts.

VI.23. The Advisory Committee notes from table 25.1 that the extrabudgetary resources are estimated at $204,438,100 for 1998-1999 as compared to $190,189,300 for 1996-1997. The Committee was informed that an audit of trust funds was carried out in March 1997. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was also informed that seven staff members (3 in New York and 4 in Geneva) are responsible for the management of the trust funds.

VI.24. As indicated in table 25.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 75, which is the same as the number of regular budget posts in 1996-1997. As indicated in table 25.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1998-1999 is 255, representing a decrease of 37 extrabudgetary posts as compared with the total of 292 posts for the biennium 1996-1997.

VI.25. The Advisory Committee is concerned with the lack of capacity to monitor and control trust funds. The Committee is also not satisfied with the information regarding a computerized information system on trust funds. In view of the workload involved in preparing the work plan for trust funds and the workload related to preparing reports to donors, the Committee believes that there is an urgent need to establish a computerized system to manage the large number of trust funds.

VI.26. With regard to rates charged to donors, the Advisory Committee was informed that the rate of 13 per cent was applied to all trust funds except for the support programme, where, owing to the fact that the transfer mechanism does not involve much additional work, the rates range between 3 to 13 per cent. In this connection, it is the view of the Committee that guidelines should be established and criteria set for funds that should be exempt and those which are to be charged the full rate.

VI.27. Information on gratis personnel is provided in footnote a to table 25.3. The Advisory Committee's views on gratis personnel have been indicated in its report on the subject (A/51/813). The Committee recalls the provision of General Assembly resolution 51/243 of 15 September 1997, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to phase out expeditiously type II gratis personnel, as well as Action 3 of the Secretary-General's measures and proposals for reform contained in his report on renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform (A/51/950), in which it is stated that a plan will be developed to phase out the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat at the earliest possible date.

VI.28. With regard to the Lessons Learned Unit, the Advisory Committee was informed that this function is assigned two posts. In this connection, the Committee notes from table 25.3 that the Department has 57 personnel who serve as members of United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams in the field to address disasters and humanitarian emergencies. The Committee was informed that these personnel have a stand-by status and are deployed on location as required.

VI.29. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 25.15 that as a result of the reorganization, two D-1 posts (1 in New York and 1 in Geneva) are to be redeployed from executive direction and management to the programme of activities.

VI.30. The Advisory Committee also notes from table 25.19 that the total number of posts for the Executive Office has been reduced from 31 to 26. However, no reasons have been given for the reduction.

VI.31. As indicated in paragraph 25.51, the Department will continue to maintain its responsibility for the Relief Logistics Centre at Pisa, Italy, which is currently funded entirely from extrabudgetary resources. The Advisory Committee was informed that this function was being reviewed and that the facility may be relocated. It is the view of the Committee that it might be desirable for the Department to move out of the management of this function and instead concentrate on the coordination of mobilization of resources and provision of information; the Secretary-General should explore with other agencies such as UNHCR and WFP the possibility of common use of this facility.

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform: measures and proposals (A/52/303)

The above report was issued subsequent to the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

As shown in table 25.1 of the report, the financial consequences of the Secretary-General's actions and recommendations relating to section 25 would be a reduction of $3,483,900, from $21,885,000 to $18,401,100, and, as shown in table 25.2 of the report, there would be a reduction of 25 posts (16 Professional and 9 General Service).

At the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report, a decision still had not been reached on how the Secretary-General's reform proposals would be dealt with in the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee will therefore revert to consideration of document A/52/303 in due course.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6 and corrigendum (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1).

[2] Ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1).

[3] See A/AC.96/884, para. 63.

[4] A/AC.96/884.

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

PART VII. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Section 26. Public information

VII.1. The regular budget estimates for part VII, which covers only section 26, Public information, amount to $140,327,600 for the biennium 1998-1999. The estimates reflect a net negative resource growth of $2,497,800, or 1.8 per cent, compared with the 1996-1997 appropriations, and provide for the following changes in the staffing requirements: the abolition of 28 Professional posts, 24 General Service posts and 29 posts under other categories, and the redeployment of one P-4 post to section 8 of the regular budget. The proposed resources also reflect, as can be seen from table 26.2 of the proposed programme budget, reductions of $9,900 for travel, $287,000 for general operating expenses, $83,500 for hospitality, $261,500 for supplies and materials and $40,000 for grants and contributions, while increases are proposed under other staff costs ($469,500), contractual services ($736,800) and furniture and equipment ($659,900).

VII.2. As shown in table 26.1, extrabudgetary resources are estimated at $6,345,800, which reflects an increase over $5,747,600 estimated for 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee notes from the table that no estimates are given in

* The present document contains part VII of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

respect of extrabudgetary resources to be made available for services in support of extrabudgetary substantive activities; those had been estimated at $6.3 million for 1998-1999.

VII.3. The Advisory Committee points out that the amounts of $140,327,600 requested under the regular budget and $6,345,800 estimated under extrabudgetary resources do not represent the total resources allocated to public information activities of the entire Organization. The Committee was informed, upon inquiry, that, in addition, regular budget resources estimated at $6,008,100 have been requested for public information activities under other sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, as follows:

	Section	Number of posts		Total costs (Thousands of United States dollars)
		Professional	General Service	
7.	Policy coordination and sustainable development	3	3	1 048.7
8.	Africa: New Agenda for Development	3	-	1 422.1
17.	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	4	14	2 374.3
19	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	1	3	1 003.8
20.	Economic and social development in Western Asia	-	2	159.2
	Total	11	22	6 008.1

VII.4. The Advisory Committee points out, in this connection, that substantive departments and offices of the Secretariat also perform public information activities, the cost of which cannot be easily identified. Such activities take the form of preparing for and conducting exhibitions, special events, seminars and workshops and issuing various public information materials, such as booklets, journals, magazines and leaflets, and the presentation of websites and pages on the Internet.

VII.5. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the effectiveness of the Secretariat in public information could be considerably greater if the Department of Public Information were assigned additional coordination responsibilities. The Committee recommends, therefore, that the Secretary-General conduct a review of ways in which the public information requirements of the various departments could be coordinated under the umbrella of the Department of Public Information, including the redeployment to it, when economically feasible, of resources related to public information activities that are currently budgeted under other budget sections. The Committee recommends that this issue be examined by the Secretary-General in the context of implementation of such recommendations of the Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities as may be approved (see para. VII.7 below).

VII.6. In the course of its review, the Advisory Committee took note of efficiency projects being implemented by the Department of Public Information, as reflected in document A/51/873. One of the two efficiency projects resulting in savings ($600,000) identified in the report relates to the continued integration of United Nations information centres with UNDP field offices. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that the estimated savings and efficiency gains resulted from the use of information technologies, whereby about 20 United Nations information centres, including 9 that are integrated and/or headed by a UNDP resident representative, currently benefit from sharing UNDP communications facilities. Such cooperation includes the provision of e-mail or access to the Internet by means of a UNDP link. Some information centres also share local area network (LAN) environments with UNDP and receive LAN maintenance services provided by UNDP.

VII.7. The Advisory Committee was also cognizant of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950). As indicated in paragraphs 251 and 252 of the report, the Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities was set up by the Secretary-General pursuant to his report of 17 March 1997 (A/51/829). The Task Force has submitted its report to the Secretary-General. The Committee was informed that the Secretary-General was currently reviewing the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Force and would submit his report on the issue for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform: measures and proposals (A/52/303)

The above report was issued subsequent to the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

As shown in paragraphs 26.2 and 26.4 of that report, the financial consequences of the Secretary-General's actions and recommendations relating to section 26 would be a reclassification of 1 Assistant Secretary-General post to the Under-Secretary-General level and an abolition of 62 posts (1 P-4, 10 General Service and 51 local level). This would entail a reduction of $1,318,600, from $140,327,600 to $139,009,000.

At the time of the Advisory Committee's consideration of its draft report, a decision still had not been reached on how the Secretary-General's reform proposals would be dealt with in the General Assembly. The Committee will therefore revert to consideration of document A/52/303 in due course.